ARTHUR FITZ-ALBINI,

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ARTHUR FITZ-ALBINI.

CHAPTER I.

ARTHUR FITZ-ALBINI, whoſe memoirs I am now about to write, was born at Dallington, in the county of *****, on the 3d of July, 1769. His health and his employments, during his earlieſt years, were watched with that ſolicitude with which fond parents are accuſtomed to attend an only child, the ſole hope of an antient and honourable

family. His boyhood diſcovered nothing which, to the generality of obſervers, appeared extraordinary. He was ſhy and penſive—though his ſpirits were unequal, and burſts of occaſional gaiety diſplayed themſelves to his intimate friends. At ſchool his proficiency was uncertain; and his exerciſes, though uncommon, not always good. It ſeemed often in them as if he was ſtruggling at ſome half-formed ideas, which his mind had not ſtrength enough to reduce into clearneſs; and his compoſitions were almoſt always inferior to thoſe who, not thinking for themſelves, expreſſed with facility and perſpicuity the ſuperficial ideas which were treaſured up in their memories. He left ſchool, therefore, with a character of doubtful abilities, of which

ſome

ſome ſpoke highly, and others deſpiſed. At college his character was ſtill leſs known than at ſchool; and he left it with diſguſt.

The world was now before him. He had ambition, but not for trivial diſtinctions. The words *faſhion* and *ton* were ſo little thought of by him, that they were even beneath his contempt. He was ſure that his deſcent, and he believed that his fortune, qualified him for that more elevated ſphere of action in which the talents he felt within him inſpired him with the wiſh to move. But of neither of theſe qualifications was he vain. He looked back, indeed, with ſatisfaction and reverence upon thoſe anceſtors who had been eminent for their

virtues, or their powers of mind, in exalted ſtations; and he was attached with a warm and unſhaken affection to the abode, not only of his own nativity, but of a long line of thoſe whoſe illuſtrious blood flowed in his veins.

His firſt wiſh was for a ſeat in parliament; which ſoon became in his power, at an expence very inconſiderable to the apparent fortune of his father. But in this wiſh he was diſappointed. His father refuſed to advance the money, with a mixture of fretfulneſs, ſolicitude, and anger, which aſtoniſhed him the more, becauſe he had always been inſtigated by him to a life of enterprize and ambition.

This

This father lived himſelf ſo retired, and with ſuch œconomy, as gave reaſon to hope an immenſe accumulation to the patrimonial fortune; and the ſon, therefore, felt, with exceſſive acuteneſs, this harſh refuſal of ſo ſmall a ſum. Nor did he receive with leſs pain his father's commands than his prohibitions; when thoſe commands affected his conduct in the very ſerious affairs of life, in which he thought he had a right to chuſe for himſelf. Heireſſes of large neighbouring eſtates, and citizens' daughters of immenſe fortunes, were pointed out to him in a manner at which he could not avoid feeling repugnance and indignation.

His active mind now languiſhed for want of employment. A ſort of gloom began to overſpread his ſpirits. The ſolitude of the country increaſed his melancholy. He found no neighbours of congenial minds. Fox-hunters, and Bond-ſtreet coxcombs, were alike the objects of his averſion and contempt. And the contempt and the averſion were mutual.

His ſole amuſement was now to be immured in his father's capacious library, except when he was riding, or walking by himſelf in the moſt ſolitary parts of the wild and wooded park. In that library he ſtudied principally the hiſtory and the arts of his country; and in the long hours of his leiſure deſcended gradually

dually from general to particular hiſtory, till he began to feel his heart intereſted, and his imagination inflamed, even by the dull Baronages in which he found ſo many of his anceſtors recorded. His anger indeed ſometimes roſe at the tedious details and undiſcriminating praiſes of theſe ſtupid books; and he looked upon the authors of them with the ſame ſcorn as *Burke* has ſo eloquently deſcribed. Still he conſidered many of the materials dug out by theſe laborious people to be curious and valuable; and erected fabrics of his own with them, which enlightened his underſtanding and ſoothed his fancy.

The active lives of which he read, however, did not tend to ſuppreſs his

ambition, and foſter his content. He could not help ſometimes reflecting, that the fortune which his father ſeemed to be increaſing to an uſeleſs abundance might part of it be better employed in contributing to his preſent enjoyment, while his hopes were warm, and his mind and his health in their full vigour. He ſaw blockheads mounting over his head; and men who, in talents, in birth, or wealth, were widely his inferiors, not only inſulting him by the importance of honourable offices, but really, from the neceſſity of habitual exertion, and the opportunity of the beſt and fulleſt information, exceeding him in the cultivation and activity of their minds.

While

While ſuch were his reflections and his remarks, he always exerted his fortitude and his philoſophy; but it ſometimes failed him. In the pure air of the country, in the laughing landſcape around him, he for hours together forgot his chagrin; but, on return to his ſtudies, ſome political pamphlet attracted his notice; ſome rival's ſpeech in parliament caught his eye; and he grew reſtleſs again.—

As he contemplated the portrait of ſome warrior, or ſome ſtateſman in the gallery; as he reflected on the unfading trophies or ſpeaking memorials they had left; he aſked, "Why am I alone "of this numerous race to ſlumber away "my life in indolence and obſcurity?

"Are my talents ſo ſmall? Are my "wiſhes ſo mean? Am I happy in a "mere ſenſual exiſtence? Or, am I to "exert my mind in forming no theories "but thoſe uſeleſs viſions which are "loſt again as ſoon as they riſe? The "little abilities with which Nature has "endowed me will ſoon be gone for "ever, for want of exerciſe. The ti-"midity and embarraſſment with which "I ſpeak will ſoon become habitual; "and the powers, which were at leaſt "formed for perpetual activity, may "ſoon turn inward, and feed upon them-"ſelves. My father ſeems unhappy: "he ſometimes ſpeaks as if his hopes in "me had been diſappointed—But am I "to blame? What would he have me "do? Can I be the tool of a miniſter?

" Can I come a dependant into parlia-
" ment? Would he, rich as he is, to
" ſave a few thouſands, have me diſ-
" grace an independent and unſullied
" name? Sure, I am not deceived!
" He muſt he rich! Yet it ſometimes
" ſeems to me, as if nothing but diſ-
" treſs could cauſe this harſhneſs in him;
" for, I cannot believe him of an avari-
" cious nature. I ſhudder at this
" thought; and at the vague ſtories
" which I once heard! Certainly, for
" myſelf, I could bear poverty, if it did
" not come upon me unprepared. For
" myſelf, I can bear it. But I cannot
" bear that the hereditary hoſpitality of
" this place, ſo uſeful to a poor and nu-
" merous neighbourhood, ſhould end in
" me!—Perhaps, then, I have no right

" to complain! Yet it cannot be, that
" my father ſhould have dealt with me
" with ſo little candour and openneſs—I
" will not ſuffer ſuch ſuſpicions to enter
" my thoughts."—

A new courſe of melancholy fixed upon his mind. He wept as he beheld the caſtellated manſion, and ſtrolled through its numerous apartments. He ſaw his father with a mixture of diſtruſt and pity. He aſſigned new reaſons for the care-worn face of his mother. He felt the neceſſity of a change of ſcene; and haſtened, as the winter approached, to plunge himſelf into the buſtle of the metropolis. The eccentricity and the reſerve of his manners were not generally attractive; but there

was

was ſomething in his ſenſe, his energy, and his ſenſibility, which intereſted moſt of thoſe people of underſtanding who had an opportunity of converſing more familiarly with him. Nor were his family and his eſtates forgotten amongſt his attractions, though he himſelf ſeemed entirely unconſcious of thoſe recommendations.

London exhibited, to a ſtrong mind and ſtrong paſſions like his, a ſtruggle of pleaſures and mortifications—He was praiſed and calumniated; admired and ridiculed; courted and neglected. He ſaw fellows ſweeping by him in the glitter of coronets, whoſe fathers had come home loaded with crimes, and the ſpoils of India, whither they had been ſent by the

the bounty of his family, in which they had been menial ſervants: he ſaw theſe people, in the opinions of the women, and the annals of faſhion, of ſupreme conſequence; while himſelf was ſuppoſed to be of ſuch obſcurity, that his very name was not recognized. He ſaw theſe fellows look aſkance upon him with the indifference with which they would behold an inferior being; while, if he ſpoke with the wiſdom of angels, they would treat it with contempt, for coming from a being ſo obſcure in their eſtimation as he was. He found in each of all the various modes, honourable and diſhonourable, by which diſtinction is aimed at, a certain circle formed, within the pale of which, whoever was not admitted was denied the honours of the fraternity—

while

while admiſſion within the pale was, for the moſt part, gained by the impudence and intrigues of pretenders, who had no ſort of merit which ought to have been their title to it. Thus, for inſtance, *faſhion* and *ton* might be ſuppoſed to require birth, rank, education, and fortune; whereas, the greater part of thoſe, whom the world enrolls among this illuſtrious body, poſſeſs few—and many, none of theſe qualifications. A majority are of low birth, low fortune, vulgar manners; and have nothing but the abject perſeverance with which they have attached themſelves to people of rank. Again, in a more ſtriking inſtance—Fitz-Albini had hoped that, at leaſt, in the circles of literature, a juſter eſtimate would be found. But he ſoon diſcovered,

vered, that the greater part of thoſe who were the well-known members of theſe parties, were the flimſy appendants to genius, the little meteors of a day, whoſe affected productions could only live while themſelves were fluttering about to diſplay them and keep them alive. He ſaw poets, who were in vogue becauſe their productions never ſoared above ordinary events, and ordinary feelings.—He ſaw eminent politicians, who diſguſted him by a certain ſort of jargon, and cant phraſes, by which they concealed not only their ignorance, but their total want of mental powers.—He ſaw hiſtorians and antiquaries, who were incapable even of writing their own language with tolerable grammatical purity; but who had acquired

acquired their fame by knowing the title-pages of ſcarce books, and collecting them, at whatever price, at all ſales.—All this while, the true genius of every claſs, contented with his own powers, uſed no arts to force himſelf into notice, and was therefore totally unknown, and totally unheeded, by thoſe more famed ſocieties.

Yet in London he found much to gratify him. The buſy ſtreets afforded ſubjects of reflection to an active underſtanding. In ſociety he occaſionally met with a concentration of ſuch knowledge, ſuch ſenſe, ſuch genius, as a country life never affords. Even the moſt brilliant abilities are too apt to ſink into indolence, ſometimes even torpor, by a long life ſpent

in

in the inactivity of the country.—In ſuch caſes, "ſolitude and tranquillity," as Werter ſays, "give an enjoyment of "life. Life itſelf is happineſs, and the "pleaſure of mere exiſtence ſo entirely "abſorbs" a man of genius, "that he "neglects his talents."—Here, on the contrary, the colliſion of the intellectual powers, rivalſhip, exertion, all contribute to ſharpen them.—

The ſhops of bookſellers, the repoſitories of artiſts, all attracted and gratified him.

His relations were numerous; and what the world calls highly reſpectable. They were in general rich, and well-allied. In ſhort, he could have boaſted, had

had he been inclined to boaſt of ſuch things, that he was related to almoſt all that was ſplendid and antient amongſt the nobility. But he knew but few of theſe; and courted none of them. He had, indeed, a firſt couſin, the ſon of his father's younger brother, who was well-known, and in high eſtimation amongſt them all. And this couſin poſſeſſed enough family-kindneſs to him, to have willingly introduced him amongſt them all. But this, for a variety of reaſons, Fitz-Albini either neglected, or declined.

This couſin had been born and educated in the metropolis; and, at the age of 16, had bought a commiſſion in the guards. His father had enjoyed a place under

under government; and early in life had married an heireſs from the city, with £.20,000;—of which the ſon came into poſſeſſion, by the death of both his parents, at the age of 21. He was a young man, of a good perſon, and an elegant appearance and manners; but extremely weak, and vain; the conſequence of which was, that his whole thoughts were directed to trifles. He had no other idea of the purpoſes of life, but to dreſs in a *certain* way; to uſe *certain* phraſes; to lounge away *certain* hours in Bond-ſtreet, or the Park, and to frequent *certain* aſſemblies, clubs, and public places, with a *certain* ſet.

Wherever it happened that theſe couſins met in the ſame company, there was ſcarce

ſcarce an inſtance in which the advantage was not ſuppoſed to be in favour of this ſuperficial young man. Nothing would have made the party in general ſtare ſo much as an attempt to prefer poor Arthur to his more *flaſhy* relation. The ſuperiority was ſuppoſed to be ſo decided, that it never could admit of a queſtion.

The following diſpute, however, once paſſed on the ſubject: a young man, who lived in theſe faſhionable circles, and in general ſmothered his natural ſenſe, which fitted him for better purpoſes, occaſionally fond of contradiction and ſingularity, very roughly replied to ſome one, who was laughing at Arthur.

"Sir,"

"Sir," ſaid he, "on what ground "does the perſon in queſtion raiſe your "contempt?"

"Becauſe, ſir, he is a country-quiz, "and a bore, and a ſtupid fellow, who "has neither knowledge of the world, "nor ſpirit to live in it."

"How ſo, ſir?"

"Why, does he talk with that happy "volubility and eaſe which diſtinguiſhes "his couſin? Does he dreſs with that "happy (however painful) neglect? "Does he talk to Lady ——— at the "Opera? or ſaunter with the — — — "down Bond-ſtreet? Does he poſſeſs "that enlightened manner, that pre-

"eminence

" eminence over the vulgar, which ſmiles
" with a vacant gaiety when they weep,
" and preſerves an unmoved ſolemnity
" of countenance when they laugh?
" In ſhort, that happy art, that *je ne*
" *ſcai quoi*, that — — — —"

" That art, ſir, I ſuppoſe you mean,
" which degrades an intellectual being
" to ſuch a creature as requires only the
" underſtanding of an idiot, and a heart
" no more ſenſible than ſtone."

" But ſure you muſt allow that all
" knowledge, but the knowledge of life,
" is romance and theory! Is not this
" the knowledge that 'comes home to
" men's buſineſs, and boſoms?' What
" is the underſtanding, that cannot ex-

" ert

" ert itſelf in ſociety? or the learning,
" that does not teach us freedom, eaſe,
" and elegance, in the conduct of the
" world?"

" And do you really ſuppoſe that
" theſe contemptible wretches, who dreſs,
" and ſimper, and know a few change-
" able ceremonials, and talk a few cant
" phraſes, and frequent a few preſcribed
" places, are acquainted with life; with
" human nature; with the operation of
" the paſſions; with the real conduct of
" the world? Alas! poor things! the
" very clown, who walks the ſame limi-
" ted furrows of a few ſmall acres from
" year to year, and who but once in the
" twelvemonth even ſees the next mar-
" ket-town, whoſe very countenance
" looks

"looks as fixed as wood, becauſe the
"exertion of thought has ſcarce ever
"diſturbed its muſcles; even this unin-
"formed being knows probably more
"of human nature than they do!"

Such was the accidental defence of the character of Arthur, againſt the general neglect with which he was received amongſt the acquaintance of his couſin. He was naturally but too acutely ſenſible to neglect and ridicule; and this exceſſive ſenſibility too often gave an embarraſſment and awkwardneſs to his manners. But the ſtrength and fortitude of his mind began gradually to give him a greater firmneſs, which ſometimes even put on an appearance ſomething like defiance; an appearance which added

to the number of thoſe who hated him.

The powers of his mind began now to diſplay themſelves wherever he went, and to gain him a ſort of involuntary conſequence, which thoſe who felt it were very unwilling to allow. They watched him, therefore, with a ſly, yet unerring, malignity.

The world, and all its buſy occupations, its allurements, its follies, and its crimes, were preſſing at once upon his obſervation, and his enjoyment. To an active mind and warm paſſions, the firſt impreſſion was confuſed. To aſſert that he never made a haſty, or ill-founded obſervation, that he never yielded

yielded to the dazzle of ſhow, or the ſeductions of vice, would be unworthy of belief. Scandal, however, could yet fix on nothing which detracted much from his wiſdom, or his virtue; but that accurſed fiend was already buſy in a thouſand oblique hints and ridiculous ſtories, which might accumulate, till ſome fatal ſtep ſhould at length cauſe them to explode with ſuch exaggerated violence as might overwhelm his character for ever.

He found that no effort could yet enable him to attain that eaſineſs of manners in mixed ſociety, which is deemed ſo neceſſary to the appearance of poliſh; and this difficulty gave him, in the company of women, a character

of ſelection and particularity, which, though it intereſted ſome, highly offended others. Abſurd ſtories were therefore continually circulated of his attachments; of the imprudent match he was about to make with one, and the mercenary alliance he was going to form with another. Sometimes he was repreſented as an adventurer, who was in ſearch of an opportunity to make his fortune; and ſometimes as a romantic young man, unacquainted with life, who was about to throw away his large eſtates, and ſplendid connections, on a low and portionleſs beauty.

Diſguſt was always driving him to the ſociety of his books, his own thoughts, and a few ſenſible friends, where he

ſeemed

ſeemed truly happy, as he indulged his inſatiable thirſt of reading, or poured forth without offence the impetuous energies of ſentiment which characterized his ſoul. No other ambition but that of a ſeat in parliament remained in his heart: this early wiſh he could ſeldom eradicate; but all other wiſhes, and ſometimes even this, now yielded to the deſire of paſſing his days in the abode of his anceſtors; in the ſolitude and romantic ſcenery of the country.

He began to pine almoſt for his "old "hereditary trees;"—his imagination began to be buſy with a thouſand viſions; he fancied his tenants happy around him; and neat cottages riſing up in every nook and dingle of the

park; he ſaw the falling towers repaired to their former ſplendor; and rural hoſpitality again enliven the echoing hall of Dallington.

About this time a little circumſtance aroſe which ſhook the greatneſs of his mind, and confirmed his reſolution of retirement. Some queſtion of privilege was agitated in the Houſe of Lords, in which, I know not how, he was ſo far implicated that his evidence was required. He delivered his opinion with a firmneſs which attracted the notice of a little, proud, officious peer, of a very minute, though laborious mind; who, though he was of an extremely ſordid origin, and though his family had literally purchaſed their peerage within a very

very few years, was ſo offended with the boldneſs of his aſſertions (it happening that they were contrary to his own ideas), that, in the obſervations he made in his ſpeech, he animadverted very ſeverely upon the freedom with which obſcure individuals of lower orders in life preſumed to ſpeak before that honourable bar, and the neceſſity of preſerving inviolate the reverence due to the birth and rank which gave a ſeat in that noble aſſembly.

Never before did the paſſions of Fitz-Albini riſe ſo completely beyond his controul—"*Obſcure individuals of the "lower orders—birth—and rank!*" And theſe words from the mouth of ſuch a

man as Lord *****! The ſounds were perpetually ringing in his ears!—

Wounded pride at length ſubſided into a dignified contempt. But it was a contempt that put him ſo completely out of humour with the buſy ſcenes in which he was engaged, that he ſoon put his wiſhes into execution, of retiring to his father's houſe in the country.

The purity of his native air, the woods, the lawns, the fragrance, the quiet, the aſſociation of the ſurrounding objects with ideas of former pleaſures, ſeized upon all his ſenſes like enchantment, and filled his heart and his mind with ſenſations and ideas, that were ſo full

full and ſo confuſed as to be literally unutterable.

"How (thought he) could I leave "theſe ſcenes for the artificial pleaſures "of London! for places, where all "the malignant paſſions of our natures "are too much excited in the beſt diſpo-"ſitions, or at leaſt predominate in the "bad, at the expence of the common "happineſs! How have I thrown away "the gifts of Fortune! How have I "abuſed the happy lot to which I was "born! Theſe hills, theſe valleys, "theſe high, and wood-crowned banks, "how might I have ſighed for ſuch en-"viable bleſſings, had I not been born "to them! But poſſeſſion has made "me careleſs of their value. I have

" ſpurned them, and ſought for amuſe-
" ment amidſt profligacy and folly;
" amidſt wretchedneſs and inſipidity.
" Let me recover my taſte before it be
" too late. Let not my underſtanding
" be miſled by faſhion. But, grateful
" for the bounty of Fortune, let me die
" in the innocent ſolitude of my native
" ſpot."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER II.

SUCH were Fitz-Albini's firſt reflections on returning to his birth-place. A few days paſſed rapidly in uninterrupted enjoyment. His father's ſpirits revived at his preſence; his mother beheld him with the moſt affectionate ſmiles. His quiet, however, was ſoon diſturbed by the intruſive viſits of ſome of his country neighbours, to whom his father inſiſted upon his paying every attention. He found himſelf leſs than ever adapted to this kind of ſociety. He knew the contempt, the abhorrence, or

the envy, with which he was regarded—and he attributed to the true cauſes (a vulgar curioſity, or a reſtleſs attempt to find employment for ſome of their heavy hours), the viſits he now received.

The difficulty of finding any common topics of converſation was almoſt inſurmountable.—Books, of courſe, were a proſcribed ſubject. But even the moſt ordinary principles and events of politics, the leading outlines of what was paſſing in the world, even now, when all the governments in Europe ſeemed convulſed to their very baſe, and deſtruction threatened to be ſtalking towards every man's door by an attempted ſubverſion of thoſe principles by which his perſon and property is ſecured; even theſe, at

ſuch a time, appeared to paſs by, unheeded, or worſe than unheeded.

However, he could not avoid accepting an invitation to dinner at the houſe of one of theſe neighbours. This perſon was Mr. Bennington, of Trayling—a man of ſome family and a conſiderable hereditary fortune.—I will deſcribe the party who were engaged to meet him.

Mr. B****, the ſon of * * *

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* * * * * * * * * * * He hates the company of all, over whom he cannot preſide; and, with an affectation of humility, is more proud and envious than any body I know. But his pride, inſtead

inſtead of being manly, and his envy, inſtead of being bold, diſplay themſelves in ſneers, in peeviſhneſs, in oblique ſcandal, and dark inſinuations.

Mr. Harpur, a man nearly fifty years old, rented a manſion about three miles from Trayling.—He was formerly a Weſt-India merchant at Briſtol, during which time he led a quiet, obſcure, parſimonious, life; but, having a few years ſince determined to quit his mercantile engagements, and enjoy the remainder of his days, he took a leaſe of his preſent reſidence, and determined to make amends for the time he had loſt. He affected the man of faſhion, a character in which he made a moſt awkward appearance; gave ſplendid dinners; talked of great

great people; was familiar in the houſes of neighbouring peers; hunted, talked, and dined, with the P - - -; and became a very ſlave to amuſements, which his early habits and occupations rendered little better than torments to himſelf, to gratify a moſt contemptible vanity. The only knowledge he poſſeſſed he moſt carefully avoided ever entering upon, leſt it ſhould put others in mind of his former occupations. Half his days, therefore, were paſſed in riſing often before the dawn of day, to ſpend ten hours in hunting, of which he knew nothing to alleviate the fatigue; and then dreſſing for a ceremonious dinner, where he paſſed the remainder of the day without ever finding himſelf at eaſe, or ſcarcely deſerving

deſerving any other appellation than that of a mute.

Mrs. Burley, better known by the name of Mrs. O'Callaghan, had been the widow of an Iriſh factor, and, being left with a good income, and many daughters, took an adjacent ſeat, where ſhe exhibited her girls charms to all the young men whom ſhe believed to have good fortunes. — By this means her houſe was generally filled with a ſet of riotous young men, of all characters and deſcriptions. But, while ſhe was thus active in providing for her daughters, ſhe had not been forgetful of herſelf; nor were the attractions ſhe diſplayed without ſucceſs; wherever ſhe went, a ſet of cotemporary beaux were conſtantly

ſeen

ſeen to buz around her, towards whom ſhe was not wanting in all the little arts of coquetry and flirtation which diſtinguiſh a younger beauty in the zenith of her power. Dr. Burley, a grave, pompous divine, who could not reſiſt the charms of this "dainty widow," was not a little vain, at the age of ſixty, though hobbling with the gout, of carrying off ſuch a delectable prize from his numerous rivals.

Miſs O'Callaghan inherited all the characteriſtic excellences of her mother. Her perſon and her manners were conducted with an eaſy forwardneſs, which was ſecure of drawing a circle of admirers round her.—Fitz-Albini, from the moment he entered the room, became

came the object at whom her charms were directed.—She began by admiring and playing tricks with his dog, for which ſhe hoped the gratitude of the maſter would repay her in the admiration of herſelf. But, for once, ſhe miſtook her aim.—The "bold Iriſh girl" exhibited nothing that could excite any other paſſion than diſguſt in Fitz-Albini.—That diſguſt was ſoon diſcovered by the diſappointed beauty, and re-paid by malignant ſcandal, and envious perſecution.

The other perſons preſent were totally deficient in every trait, by which they could be particularized.—

It was an uneaſy day to Fitz-Albini. He ſeldom ſpoke, till ſome accidental ſubject vehemently excited the correction of ſome ill-tempered miſinformation, or of ſuch a miſconception of principle as was not only ſtupid, but of evil tendency. He then perhaps ſaid a few words with rather too much energy and emotion. A dead ſilence of the company followed the firſt word he ſpoke, as if to add to his diſtreſs; and when he had concluded, Dr. Burley nodded, with a kind of oracular importance; and Mr. B**** looked in the face of the perſon who ſat next him, with an expreſſion that implied ſomething between a ſuppreſſed ſmile and a ſneer.—But nobody relieved his embarraſſment by continuing the converſation.

When

When at length the hour of departure arrived, he took his leave with impatience; and began to reflect, that, however diſguſted he was with the ſociety of London, the *ſociety*, at leaſt, of the country was worſe. Aſſumed pre-eminence, vanity, and ſelf-importance, are always diſguſting: but when thoſe odious paſſions are founded on the narrow compariſons of a country neighbourhood, or the narrow objects of ambition of ſo confined a circle, they are intolerable. Proud of their deſcent, perhaps, becauſe they have lived a century in poſſeſſion of the eſtate they now hold; or of their fortune, becauſe no one within ten miles can equal them; or of their underſtandings, becauſe they lay down the law at the turnpike-meetings,

or

or quarter-ſeſſions, of the diſtrict; they either betray an overbearing inſolence, or diſcover, by their envy and malignity, that, "like the Turk," they can endure "no equal," much leſs a ſuperior, "near "the throne."—

It is melancholy to reflect, that a life, paſſed amidſt the great ſcenery of Natute, ſhould not expand the mind, and purify the paſſions.—Alas! how ſeldom is that the caſe!

"For who loves that, ſhould firſt be wiſe and good."

In an enlarged intercourſe with ſociety, ſelf-intereſt, one of the ſtrongeſt, alas! of our motives, compels us to poliſh the roughneſſes of our nature, to extend our notions, and

to

to ſoften our paſſions and our manners, till they have the appearance at leaſt, and much of the good effect, of benevolence and philanthropy. But the independence and lonelineſs of a country life call for leſs frequent exertion, and therefore foſter the propenſities of a mean heart, and ſordid underſtanding.

Fitz-Albini, therefore, reſolved againſt a mode of ſpending his time, which, while it was thus paſſed, was worſe than loſt, once more laid down plans of ſtoring his mind with all that ſtudy or reflection could furniſh him with in his preſent retirement. He yet hoped the time might come, when theſe ſtores might be brought into action; and not

be

be ſuffered to evaporate in no other good than ſelfiſh improvement.

He began to add to his father's library, already rich, all that were wanting of the original hiſtorians of Europe, and ſuch accounts of all the remaining parts of the world, as, being in the beſt known of the modern, or in the Greek or Latin languages, he was enabled to read. He peruſed with deep attention, and revolved in his active mind, the ſtrange fluctuations between barbariſm and civility, that had ſeveral times given new characters to the nations of the earth. He traced, with painful pleaſure, the rapid decline, and the ſlow riſe, of the ſun of Science; he inveſtigated the paths of its reſurgence; and beheld with melancholy

melancholy fear, the dark and impenetrable clouds that ſeem at preſent to be gathering before its pathway.

Amidſt theſe general and extenſive enquiries, he deſcended occaſionally to thoſe more minute details which are matters perhaps rather of curioſity than uſe. The origin and progreſs of the ſovereign houſes of Europe, ſo deeply connected with each other; and even of the antient nobility; more particularly thoſe of France and England, derived, for the moſt part, from one common ſtock, and ſo extremely ſimilar in their early cuſtoms, manners, and poſſeſſions, were ſubjects he did not diſdain to inveſtigate with the moſt profound labour.

Theſe ſtudies, however, only convinced him of the inſtability of human greatneſs; and the rapid mutations of honours, and of property. And he ſighed over the fallen glories of the few that ſtill ſurvived! Nor could he avoid a peculiar regret at the recognition that the name of Fitz-Albini was among the moſt remarkable of the number! He looked over the map of its wide-ſpread ruins, its dilapidated caſtles, its manors, and its foreſts; he purſued its traces till he had encompaſſed half the kingdom; and wept when he reflected that its only remaining hold was in the tottering manſion of Dallington, and its narrow appendages. And how-long, thought he, ſhall we retain this laſt and long-loved remnant of our better days?

Even

Even now an inexplicable cloud ſeemed to hover over it! The harpies of deſtruction ſeemed to grin with a dreadful kind of half-ſuppreſſed exultation at the certainty of their future prey!

Envy and Malignity, under the form of ſome of the neighbouring gentlemen, continually intruded their viſits upon him, however coldly received, with a kind of impertinent curioſity which he could ſcarcely comprehend. And one day, while he was in the deepeſt of his meditations, there came Sir James Pickman, of Brimfield-Hall, and his daughter—and at the ſame time Mrs. Bracey, by way of apology for her huſband; and Miſs St. Leger, a relation of her huſband, then viſiting at her houſe.

Sir James Pickman was by birth a Scotchman, who had emigrated thence a boy, and ingratiated himſelf into the ſhop of a great dealer in military accoutrements, in which he gradually roſe to be firſt partner; and, by army contracts, and the ſubſequent buſineſs of a banker and a ſtock-jobber, was ſuppoſed to have amaſſed a conſiderable fortune. In a numerous creation of baronets a few years ſince, he had arrived at that honour, together with a Scotch man-midwife, two Eaſt-Indians, the pennyleſs dependant of a pompous nobleman; a country-gentleman of overbearing temper, whoſe father had amaſſed a good fortune in the occupation of a miller; a vain clergyman, who had lately married a rich widow, whoſe fourth

couſins

couſins had formerly enjoyed the honour; three placemen of the loweſt origin, and no fortune; and a ſpeculating hop-factor, of doubtful credit.

Sir James Pickman was not inſenſible to the vanity of deſcent; and, had his name not been quite ſo obſcure an one, would probably have contrived to annex himſelf to ſome family, of whoſe ſplendour he could have boaſted.—Nor was his daughter compoſed of very hard materials.—She had a good perſon, ſet off by all the advantages that expenſive dreſſes, and all the arts of milliners and mantua-makers, could give it; and a countenance full of a particular expreſſion, with large black eyes, dark and very coarſe brown hair, and a complexion

almoſt of a Spaniſh darkneſs. She had early indulged a romantic diſpoſition, and was particularly well read in the wonderful fictions of a circulating-library.

When Fitz-Albini entered the room, notwithſtanding the ill humour, in which he was, probably diſplayed him to little advantage, the attractions of his perſon were ſufficient to weaken the immediate intereſt of Miſs Pickman. Nor was ſhe pleaſed at the forwardneſs with which Mrs. Bracey inſtantly forced herſelf into converſation with him. There was no ſubject on which Mrs. Bracey did not ſucceſſively enter without intermiſſion. If painting was mentioned, ſhe drew out of her pocket ſome wonderful performances of her

her own, done after three leſſons only.—If riding, walking, dancing, travelling, viſiting, acquaintance, health, illneſs, building, furniſhing houſes, laying out grounds, regulating her houſehold; or whatever elſe could ariſe; ſhe had ſtill ſome wonderful ſtory to relate, by which ſhe ſilenced every other perſon.

Fitz-Albini was ſo overpowered by her volubility of language, and obtruſive manners, that he ſeemed totally at a loſs how to extricate himſelf from her. Miſs Pickman had already left her chair, and employed herſelf in looking out of the window. Fitz-Albini taking advantage of this circumſtance croſſed the room to her, and made ſome trifling remark on the ſcenery, which, however,

had the appearance of an attention to her, at that moment particularly pleaſing—ſhe diſcovered it by her manner, and the lively intereſt with which ſhe entered into a converſation with him, who was happy at any pretence for avoiding to liſten any longer to Mrs. Bracey.

Not many minutes had paſſed in this way, when a ſudden ſcream alarmed the nerves of Fitz-Albini, who, looking round, and obſerving it to come from the part where Mrs. Bracey ſat, haſtened towards her, when, as he was approaching her chair, ſhe ſunk as if in a fit off her ſeat, and fell almoſt lifeleſs into his arms. She ſoon, however, recovered; and ſhewed leſs diſtreſs at this aukward ſituation than Fitz-Albini;

—whom

—whom yet ſhe contrived to detain in fetching water for her, and various other attentions, for a conſiderable time.

This incident did not paſs without a few malicious glances from Miſs Pickman; to whom Mrs. Bracey's character was better known than it could be to Fitz-Albini.

Meanwhile, Sir James Pickman contrived to engage Fitz-Albini for a future day at Brimfield; and Mrs. Bracey inſiſted on his coming to viſit Orleton-Hall, the place of her reſidence, where ſhe had more extraordinary pictures, a more ſcarce library, and more romantic ſcenery to ſhew him, than it was likely he had ever yet met with.

What a joyful deliverance to Fitz-Albini was their departure! He ſeized his hat, and ruſhed out of the houſe, and breathed his native air, and indulged his native thoughts again.—With an hurried and impetuous ſtep, he wandered to the fartheſt and moſt retired parts of the park; and there, where he heard the ploughman, as he laboured in the furrow of a piece of waſte, now breaking up for the firſt time, fill even the diſtant hills with the echo of his loud and chearful ſong, regret ſeized him, that he had not been born to this humble ſtation. "Is not "this," ſaid he, "the real gladneſs of "the heart? Are not his ſpirits ge-"nuine? Does not his employment "innocently and uſefully occupy his "time and his thoughts? Does he

"deſpond

"deſpond beneath the inſipidity; is "he tormented by the wicked paſſions "of refined idleneſs? Does not health "brace his nerves; and labour exclude "uneaſy thoughts?" He repeated to himſelf ſome lines out of Cowley's *Country Life.*

"Bleſs'd be the man (and bleſs'd he is) whom
"e'er
"(Plac'd far out of the roads of hope or fear)
"A little field and little garden feeds;
"The field gives all that frugal Nature needs;
"The wealthy garden lib'rally beſtows
"All ſhe can aſk, when ſhe luxurious grows.
"The ſpecious inconveniences that wait
"Upon a life of buſineſs, and of ſtate,
"He ſees (nor does the ſight diſturb his reſt);
"By fools deſir'd, by wicked men poſſeſs'd," &c.

Again, he recollected Claudian's *Old Man of Verona*; thus beautifully tranſlated by Cowley:

" Happy the man, who his whole time doth
" bound
" Within th' encloſure of his little ground:
" Happy the man, whom the ſame humble place
" (Th' hereditary cottage of his race),
" From his firſt riſing infancy has known,
" And by degrees ſees gently bending down,
" With natural propenſion, to that earth,
" Which both preſerv'd his life, and gave him
" birth.
" Him no falſe diſtant lights, by Fortune ſet,
" Could ever into fooliſh wand'rings get;
" He never dangers either ſaw or fear'd;
" The dreadful ſtorms at ſea he never heard:
" He never heard the ſhrill alarms of war;
" Or the worſe noiſes of the lawyer's bar:
" No change of conſuls marks to him the year;
" The change of ſeaſons is his calendar:

" The

"The cold and heat Winter and Summer ſhews;
"Autumn by fruits, and Spring by flow'rs, he
"knows:
"He meaſures time by landmarks, and has found,
"For the whole day, the dial of his ground:
"A neighb'ring wood, born with himſelf, he ſees,
"And loves his old cotemporary trees:
"He 's only heard of near Verona's name,
"And knows it, like the Indies, but by fame;
"Does with a like contentment notice take
"Of the Red Sea, and of Benacus' lake:
"Thus health and ſtrength he to a third age
"enjoys,
"And ſees a long poſterity of boys.
"About the ſpacious world let others roam,
"The voyage life is longeſt made at home."—

Theſe and many other of Cowley's poems, written in a ſimilar train of thought, came in full force upon his mind. They agreed with his own conviction.

viction. He blamed the aſpiring ſchemes of life he had formerly indulged.—He wiſhed he could again have ſaid with his beloved poet,

"If ever I more riches did deſire
"Than cleanlineſs and quiet do require;
"If e'er ambition did my fancy cheat,
"With any wiſh ſo mean as to be great;
"Continue, Heaven, ſtill from me to remove
"The humble bleſſings of that life I love."

The fears that had ſometimes intruded themſelves regarding his father's affairs, had at this moment loſt much of their force. He ſoothed himſelf with the idea, that, let what would happen, he could retire to ſome farm or cottage, and ſpend the remainder of his days in contented enjoyment of the ſcenery of Nature, and the intellectual faculties with which Heaven had endowed him.

CHAPTER III.

DURING the three or four ſucceeding days, the repeated notes and meſſages Fitz-Albini received from Mrs. Bracey abſolutely compelled him to go to Orleton, to avoid the continuance of ſo horrid a perſecution.

He had not been at Orleton ſince his infancy, but had ſome recollection of the kindneſs of Mr. Bracey to himſelf, when a little boy. He therefore felt pleaſure at the renewal of his acquaintance, and was received by Mr. Bracey with

with a ſort of good-natured civility, which ſoon put an end to the embarraſſment of an introductory viſit.—Mrs. Bracey, however, ſoon contrived that her huſband ſhould be called away on ſome important buſineſs; while herſelf undertook to conduct Fitz-Albini through all the wonders of a rambling old houſe, in which ſhe promiſed him the ſight of ſome very antient pictures, and ſome very rare books.

Fitz-Albini did not expect much; but he found ſuch ridiculous old daubings, by way of antient paintings, and a few of the moſt vulgar folios of a country-gentleman's library of the laſt century, by way of rare books; that it was with extreme difficulty he kept his temper,

temper, or his countenance; while Mrs. Bracey, by ſometimes affecting to ſtumble over the old floors, or along the dark galleries, or frequently calling for his aſſiſtance through the ſtrange irregularities of the houſe, either fell into his arms, or filled him with diſtreſs and anger at the aukward ſituations into which ſhe put him.

When the pictures, the books, and the wonders of the houſe, no longer afforded ſubjects for her volubility, ſhe entered into the characters of the neighbourhood, of whom ſhe told ſuch ſtrange and improbable ſcandal, which, as to many he knew to be moſt entire and moſt bitter, though very ſtupid, fiction, that he began to think her underſtanding

was

was a little deranged; yet it was ſo void of all ingenuity, that he could hardly believe it aroſe from ſuch a cauſe. An unfortunate window diſcovered Brimfield, the ſeat of Sir James Pickman, at a diſtance. This gave riſe to the queſtioning Fitz-Albini's opinion of Miſs Pickman's beauty; which, half-ill-naturedly, he commended in very ſtrong terms.

The lady's little ferret-eyes immediately ſparkled with anger—and with a ſort of hyſteric laugh, and a ſhrill tone, ſhe cried out—"You don't know all "about her, that I do!"—"Very pro-"bably, Madam!" Fitz-Albini replied, very coldly.—

This

This repreſſing anſwer put an end for a ſhort time to the converſation.—When they returned to the drawing-room, they found there Mr. Bracey and Miſs St. Leger; the latter of whom Mrs. Bracey thought proper to ſet off by every little art her ſlender underſtanding, fertile in ſuch expedients, could ſuggeſt. Whether it was that ſhe wiſhed to make uſe of the attractions of her youthful perſon in oppoſition to Miſs Pickman, or that ſhe was willing for once to do a good-natured thing, by way of *variety*, during the reſt of the day ſhe did not ceaſe to purſue the ſame plan.—She placed her next Fitz-Albini at dinner—ſhe told a thouſand inſtances of her obliging diſpoſition—ſhe called forth the exerciſe of her accompliſhments—till the

the poor girl, wearied out, retired from the room; and, on her return, diſcovered by her ſwollen eyes ſhe had been in tears. The game ſhe was playing was not undetected by Fitz-Albini; and he would have ſhrunk with rudeneſs from Miſs St. Leger, had not her ſenſibility excited his compaſſion.

Once more the time arrived at which he found himſelf extricated from ſuch troubleſome ſociety. As he mounted his horſe, twilight was coming on; and a drizzling rain haſtened the cloſe of the day. He walked, however, a foot-pace, and gave the full range again to his expanſive mind. "Deteſtable ſo-"ciety!" ſaid he to himſelf: "if this "be ſociety; rather let me wander all

"my

" my days among the woods, that have " never been marked by a human foot- " ſtep! There at leaſt I can enjoy a " creation more conſonant to my ideas " of human dignity! My fancy will " form to itſelf a world of its own, " conſiſtent with my early dreams of " life!"—Thus he wandered on, loſt in meditations; and at length digeſted his ideas in the following

SONNET.

Along the lone wood ſhrieks the hollow blaſt;
And quick the doubling miſts obſcure the day:
Where the voice echoes, or the windows caſt
Their diſtant glancing lights, I ſeek my way:

Before

Before me, thick and ſheety vapours ſpread
Seem, like a lake, to level all the vale;
While drives the drizzling fog, and o'er my head
The bending clouds in pillowy darkneſs ſail.
Theſe are the ſcenes, in which, howe'er I rove,
In doubtful paths, my fancy loves to riſe!
Ideal buildings people every grove,
And fairy foreſts bound th' approaching ſkies!
Clad in the grey obſcurity, I view
More beauteous ſcenes than Nature ever knew!

The exerciſe of this ride gave him a night of ſound ſleep; and he roſe with refreſhed ſpirits to indulge, uninterruptedly, in his own ſtudies, and his own ſolitary walks.

The Autumn was haſtening on—the greater part of the corn had been already imbarned:

imbarned: and the leaves of the foreſt began to aſſume a golden tinge, the moſt rich and happy of all hues for the imitation of a painter. A kind of liquid ſplendour ſat upon the whole ſurrounding ſcenery. Herds of all ſorts peopled the ſtubbles, and the woods; and even the ſwine, which, at this time of the year while they move in numbers, are very pictureſque, began to take a diſtant range to feed on the falling acorns, as well as the refuſe of the ſickle and the ſcythe.

Amid ſuch ſcenes Fitz-Albini forgot all his cares, and felt nothing but the moſt exalted pleaſure.—He had croſſed the moſt diſtant boundary of the park; and was already ſome miles advanced beyond it, immerſed in his own reflections,

tions, when, from the top of an hill, he ſurveyed a large caſtellated manſion beneath him, which he ſoon recollected to be *Penſhurſt*, the venerable ſeat of the illuſtrious family of *Sydney*.

As he had not ſurveyed it for many years, he determined to haſten into the valley, and view it again. He enquired for the old houſekeeper, who had ſhewn it to him, when a boy; but ſhe was not ſtill in her office.—He had, however, the ſatisfaction of hearing ſhe was ſtill yet alive; and of viſiting her at a neat houſe in the village, where the majeſtic old woman, at the age of 97, or 98, ſtill retained not only the traces of her former beauty, but her faculties—and even her chearfulneſs—though ſhe ſighed

at the fallen glories of the dear old hall, where ſhe remembered ſo much ſplendour and hoſpitality, and at leaſt five generations of its once-gay and renowned inhabitants.

Fitz-Albini could ſcarcely walk over this ſtately building, now ſo chilly and deſerted, without being overwhelmed with melancholy—the gallery of portraits—the curious pictures, by Holbein, of Edward the Sixth, the Duke of Northumberland, Sir Henry Sidney, and many others; the numerous likeneſſes by Janſen, Vandyke, Lely, &c. filled him with admiration.—The recurrence to his mind of ſo many illuſtrious names, Sir Philip Sidney, Spenſer,

Ben Jonſon, Algernon Sidney, and Waller, almoſt confounded him with the fulneſs of his ideas.

He ſtrolled ſlowly up the park; and ſat an hour in liſtening to the ſcreams, and watching the manœuvres of the heronry, ſtill ſubſiſting there.

During this hour, the only ideas, that were ſufficiently diſtinct to reduce themſelves into language, aſſumed the following form—

SONNET,

SONNET,

WRITTEN AT PENSHURST.

Behold thy triumphs, Time! what ſilence reigns
Along theſe lofty and majeſtic walls!
Ah! where are regal Sidney's pompous trains *?
Where Philip's tuneful lyre, whoſe dying falls
Could melt the yielding nymphs, and loveſick ſwains †?
Ah! where th' undaunted figure, tha appalls
E'en heroes? Where the lute, that on the plains
The bending trees ‡ round Sachariſſa calls?

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* Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Preſident of the Marches, who kept his court at Ludlow Caſtle.

† Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia.

‡ Alluding to Waller's lines, written at Penſhurſt.

And are they fled! Their day's for ever paſt!
Heroes and poets moulder in the earth!
No ſound is heard but of the wailing blaſt
Through the lone rooms, where echoed crowded Mirth!
Yet on their 'ſemblance Melancholy pores,
And all the faded ſplendour ſoon reſtores.

To every mind, which reflects deeply, the extinction or decay of an antient or eminent family is a ſubject of real and very profound regret. It is true, that to antiquity and luſtre of deſcent both underſtanding and virtue are often wanting. But, if ability be more frequently conſpicuous in thoſe who have climbed from a low origin up the ſteep and dangerous aſcent of ambition, virtue in ſuch families is undoubtedly by far more rare. Nor is ability always requiſite

quiſite to attain the point of rank and wealth.—And it is too certain that the proſperous road is generally through the defiles of corruption and vice. The corrupted heart, the intereſted ſentiments, the debaſed, however acute, underſtanding, of a low man grown great, are too apt to throw a tincture over the characters of his family for at leaſt a century; whereas that race which hereditary honours and affluence have long placed above what is low, ſervile, and meanly ambitious, have a much greater probability of being diſtinguiſhed by elevated ideas, and pure and independent ſouls.

A lawyer, a ſoldier, and a ſailor, who often attain the higheſt honours their country has to beſtow, do not arrive

at their reſpective ranks till a period of life at which their manners and their notions are already immoveably confirmed in the mould of their origin; nor can the outward decorations of place and title alter the early habits of the man. If ſuch be the effects in a liberal profeſſion, what muſt they be in thoſe who have aſcended from the loweſt gradations of office merely through their ſervility, and the dextrous readineſs with which an early acquaintance with the drudgery of the meaneſt buſineſs, and a total freedom from the nice reſtraints of honour and conſcience, have fitted them to be uſeful to the miniſtry of their country?

If once the reſpect that has in all ages and nations been paid to birth, be totally abandoned; if hereditary riches, education, and thoſe habits of early life, which give exalted ſentiments, and expanded powers of thinking, be not conſidered as generally neceſſary to qualify men for the ſuperior orders of ſociety—it will ſoon appear that all the principles upon which ſubordination of ranks can be defended by the philoſopher, are ſubverted; that all the evils without the advantages of inequality of conditions are impoſed upon mankind, that thoſe, whom long poſſeſſion has given the privilege of enjoying precedence without exciting envy, and who are the natural defenders of an eſtabliſhed government, become diſcontented at having others

put over their heads, who rouſe the rivalſhip of the loweſt, as having been ſo lately their equals; ſo that every order is excited to a reſtleſs and dangerous fermentation; while the meaneſt, and the worſt of mankind, trample in bloated wealth and honours, on the necks of the people, becauſe they are the moſt ſupple and uſeful inſtruments of the temporary purpoſes of a miniſter.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

FITZ-ALBINI enjoyed the walk in his return from Penſhurſt as much as that which brought him thither. The ſun, now haſtening towards the Weſt, ſhewed the landſcape in new colours, arrayed new hills in its golden lights, and left in deep ſhadow the mountains whoſe brilliancy had attracted him as he went.

While beholding the ſcenery around him, or buſied in his own reflections,

he ſeemed to "forget all time;" and evening was faſt approaching before he reached again the park pales. — He mounted at length over the ſtepping-ſtyle; and was delighted to find himſelf within its precincts. The rich luxuriance of wild wood that ſeemed to crowd around him excited affection, admiration, and rapture. He repeated to himſelf ſome lines of his friend Haſtings, which ſeemed congenial to his preſent feelings and ſituation.

LINES,

LINES,

WRITTEN ON THE RECOLLECTION OF * * * *, HIS NATIVE PLACE.

BY F. H. ESQ. 1792.

Sweet native ſpot! at thy long-cheriſh'd name
Again awakes the Muſe's dying flame:
It wakes, and lights me to thy 'tangled ſhades,
Thy groves umbrageous, and thy leaf-ſtrown glades;
Thy hills, from whence the blue horizon round,
With diſtant ſpires, and towers, and ſeas, is crown'd;
Thy glens, where, deep-retir'd, my childiſh days
Too oft were ſpent in dreams of future praiſe!—
All riſe, and, colour'd in thy fairy light,
Are bodied forth before my raviſh'd ſight,
Bright as when firſt upon my tender mind
The deep-hu'd forms of Nature were deſign'd.—

But, oh! my ſoul! though bright each object's hue,
Does Joy again ſalute thee at the view?
Have years departed, though they yet beſpeak
No ſilver hairs, no furrows on my cheek;
Say, have they paſt, nor left behind a ſting,
Regret's ſharp poiſon o'er their charms to fling?—
Thou ſpreading oak, beneath whoſe branches dark
My childhood wont ſweet Nature's voice to mark;
To ſee the golden orb at morning riſe,
And watch its crimſon fall with wiſtful eyes;
Why at thine image is my beating breaſt
With grief and penſive diſcontent oppreſt?—
Ah! now hoarſe hollow murmurs meet my ear;
And thus the deep reproach I ſeem to hear!
" Why was thine infant mind each rural ſight
" Form'd to receive, and tremble with delight?
" Why thus thy heart to beat, to thrill, to glow,
" And feel with keener anguiſh ev'ry woe?
" Oh why, while ſtretch'd beneath my cov'ring ſhade,
" Were forms aërial to thy view diſplay'd?

" Why

" Why did ſuch viſions wild thy ſoul entrance,
" And fairy circles to thy fancy dance?
" To waſte in reſtleſs indolence the day,
" Or ſeem 'mid Mirth's loud ſons, while mourn-
" ful, gay?
" In courts to bow, in forums to diſpute,
" 'Mid Folly's thoughtleſs talkers to be mute?
" With fault'ring voice, and looks that ſpeak the
" fool,
" Helpleſs to ſit, while Dulneſs gives the rule?
" To rival country ſquires, and city beaux,
" To ſeek the palm the chace or courſe beſtows?
" To vie with thoſe, whoſe hard unfeeling heart
" Can the ſure pow'r of Victory impart?
" The paths of mawkiſh Diſſipation run;
" To ride, to drive, to game—to be undone?
" Ah, no! Far other hopes thy youth deſign'd!
" To try the nobler conteſts of the mind!
" The trembling motions of the heart to trace;
" And catch the beauteous hues of Nature's face!
" Thy talent waſted, how wilt thou atone
" The flagrant crime before Heav'ns aweful throne!

" Ere

" Ere yet old Age upon thy fancy lours,
" Weakens thy hopes, and freezes all thy pow'rs,
" The flying moments ſeize; the path purſue
" That opes Fame's purer chaplets to thy view!"
Enough, lov'd Tree! Ah, now the murmurs cloſe!
The ſhadowy branches hang in deep repoſe!
Then once more, O ye boughs, whoſe ſoothing gloom
Can with freſh vigour imp the Muſe's plume,
Cheriſh the dreams, that fir'd my childiſh brain,
And bring a juſt ambition back again!—

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Fitz-Albini waked, the morning after his return from Orleton, the ſtrange viſit of the preceding day had left ſuch a ſingular impreſſion upon his mind, that, for ſome minutes, he found it difficult to perſuade himſelf it was not a dream.—And, when he really reflected that ſuch a ridiculous character as Mrs. Bracey exiſted, he burſt ſeveral times into exceſſive laughter; while at other moments her qualities, as miſchievous as they were abſurd, excited his indignation and horror; and he could not

not help feeling much pity for the diſagreeable, mortifying, and even dangerous ſituation of Miſs St. Leger.

Mrs. Bracey did not ſuffer much time to elapſe before ſhe gave him new opportunities of obſervation.—By manœuvres, of which he could not be aware, ſhe drew him into new viſits at Orleton, or new engagements in the neighbourhood, at which ſhe contrived to be preſent. Nor was her companion, who was always uſed as a counterpoiſe to the attractions of Miſs Pickman, abſent.—

Miſs Pickman, however, ſeemed to gain upon the notice of Fitz-Albini. Her aſſiduous attentions were too powerful a flattery for him entirely to withſtand.

ſtand. For who is proof againſt flattery? And, as her fortune had made her by no means unuſed to diſtinction, her preference, under ſuch circumſtances, much increaſed the compliment.

Yet this rather inflamed than extinguiſhed Mrs. Bracey's endeavours to ſupplant her. Malignant ſcandal, and groſs falſehood, were buſily employed by her for this inexcuſable purpoſe.—She whiſpered in Fitz-Albini's ear, that Miſs Pickman had made him the object of her ridicule and ſcorn behind his back; and only received his civilities to diſplay his preſumption and her victory.—All her foibles and defects ſhe exaggerated with low art and diabolical delight, while poor Miſs St. Leger was innocently made

an

an inſtrument, in whom ſhe exhibited a contraſted picture of all excellence and beauty. The amiable girl, too well acquainted with the heart of her panegyriſt, was little conſcious of the praiſes beſtowed on her, yet often found herſelf in moſt indelicate and perplexing ſituations. And from converſations, which ſhe could not always avoid to hear, ſhe ſhrunk, not indeed with abhorrence, but with the moſt cruel embarraſſment, from Fitz-Albini.

Fitz-Albini, doubtful of the ſincerity of Miſs Pickman, who had never been pleaſing to him but by contraſt with Mrs. Bracey; and, alarmed and piqued at the coldneſs and reſerve of Miſs St. Leger, whoſe beauty and ſimplicity he could

could not but admire, felt his natural diffidence alarmed, and reſolved to withdraw himſelf from ſuch ſcenes of unallayed mortification. For what could he find to conſole him in the groſs partiality of Mrs. Eracey! a partiality which had been equally diſplayed to a thouſand others! and which, he doubted not, would be equally diſplayed again!

Nor was the manner of Miſs St. Leger leſs ſtriking, when he recollected the ſtyle and the manners of the houſe in which ſhe lived, a houſe perpetually full of gentlemen, and which freedom and eaſe characterized; yet there was an eaſy dignity about her, which always kept them at a reſpectful, though not formal, diſtance.—Yet, if *he* was acci-

dentally

dentally left alone with her, he obſerved her ſelf-poſſeſſion inſtantly fly; her colour go and return; and her embarraſſment ſo great, that ſhe always took the earlieſt opportunity to make her eſcape from him. His pride was alarmed; and he took no pains to overcome a diſlike which he was not conſcious of deſerving.

The library of Dallington, its wood-walks, and its lawns, afforded him again a quiet retreat, and a new current for his ideas.—He endeavoured to examine his own character and ſituation with impartiality.—He ſaw ſo many young men proſperous and courted, to whom without flattery it was impoſſible not to feel his own ſuperiority, that he ſtrove in vain

vain to find out the cauſe, why he was leſs liked, leſs beloved, and more the object of malignity, than they.—He ſaw men, whoſe conduct was marked by a total want of principle, whoſe underſtanding was ſmall, and whoſe manners were undiſtinguiſhed by politeneſs or gaiety, received with good-will wherever they went, praiſed by many, and cenſured by none. He ſaw fortune fall upon them without envy, and adverſity attack them with univerſal expreſſions of pity.

Himſelf he ſaw often neglected, and ſometimes paſſed by with groſs affront. —The virtues he occaſionally diſplayed, or the wiſdom that at times burſt from him, and ſilenced all oppoſition, he ſaw

followed by unwilling and extorted praiſe.—And he ſaw a thouſand tongues ready to burſt forth and overwhelm him at the leaſt deviations from rectitude, or even from the appearances of rectitude. —An inequality of temper and of mind, an indignation and haughtineſs at folly and meanneſs, which ſeemed by fits to poſſeſs him, he was conſcious often raiſed the bittereſt enmity againſt him. But, when he wiſhed to pleaſe, and the ſoftneſs and benevolence of his heart diſcovered themſelves, it ſeemed ſtrange that he ſhould be the object of neglect and averſion.

Theſe mortifying reflections on himſelf were not relieved by turning his attention to his father.—There he ſaw old

age

age embittered not only by diſeaſe, but by a fretfulneſs and lowneſs of ſpirits, which ſeemed little ſhort of deſpondence. No ſoothing would alleviate his gloom—and tenderneſs ſeemed only to aggravate the deep vexation that appeared to prey upon his mind.

At length, however, he entered into a ſerious converſation with his ſon, in which he uſed ſuch arguments, or entreaties, that Arthur determined in earneſt to embrace the propoſitions that came from Sir James Pickman to his father; and, if in truth, as he was now taught (contrary to Mrs. Bracey's aſſertions), Miſs Pickman was partial to him, to embrace the good fortune thrown in his way,

way, and endeavour to make his father happy.

Two or three meetings accordingly took place; at which Arthur perſuaded himſelf that Miſs Pickman was not diſagreeable to him, and that her affection for him would ſecure his future felicity.—He could not, however, ſo haſtily perſuade himſelf to make a propoſal, on which the colour of his future life ſo much depended.—

Rumour, never at reſt, ſoon informed Mrs. Bracey what was going forward.—Though this wretched woman could have no other object in the purſuit of poor Fitz-Albini, than the temporary indulgence of a flirtation with an agreeable young

young man, to whom ſhe had yet no preference which would not equally ariſe to a thouſand others equally new to her; ſhe determined to defeat the perſon, whom ſhe choſe to conſider as her rival, at the expence of ſacrificing all the future happineſs of two families, to which ſhe had no reaſon whatever to do the ſmalleſt injury. She therefore obtruded herſelf into every company where her emiſſaries informed her they were to meet; and uſed all thoſe arts, in which the weakeſt heads, as well as the worſt diſpoſitions, are ſo fertile, to derange the ſcheme which ſhe believed to be going forward.

She began, however, to have ſome ſuſpicions of her own powers of attrac-

tion.—It was with the more eagerneſs and pains that ſhe ſet forth the charms of Miſs St. Leger, who by nature was ſo pre-eminent to her neighbours.—With what fictions and what encouragement ſhe endeavoured to feed this innocent girl, it would not be eaſy to gueſs.—But, though ſhe let her not into her deſigns, Miſs St. Leger's good ſenſe ſuggeſted to her ſome faint ſuſpicions of her ſchemes; and her natural delicacy ſhrunk from being obtruded, under any circumſtances, upon Fitz-Albini.

Yet her beauty was ſo very faſcinating, her manners ſo ſimple, and her diſtreſs ſo very violent and unaffected when the unfeeling indelicacy of Mrs. Bracey attempted to make her the inſtrument of her

her plots, that there were moments at which ſhe withdrew the attention, and ſhook the reſolution, of Fitz-Albini.

This was not unobſerved by Mrs. Bracey, who with new hope multiplied her contrivances to detach him from her rival. At length ſhe by ſome means got him to ſpend a week at Orleton—and, to make it as pleaſant as poſſible, ſhe filled the houſe with a party, among whom there were ſome very ſenſible and agreeable people; yet ſo intermixed with characters of all hues as to render it a medley, which, by the ſtrong contraſt, produced a very whimſical entertainment.

Of theſe, Colonel Fordingbridge, and Mr. Yapton, a young enſign of militia,

ſet off each other's abſurdities by mutual ridicule and contempt; yet Mrs. Bracey appeared delighted with both, while each in his turn, through ſome very perverſe and vicious taſte, ſeemed to pay homage to her attractions.—Colonel Fordingbridge was a reſerved formal ſoldier of fifty, who ſeemed better fitted for a library than a camp, having read aſſiduouſly, and treaſured up a maſs of very conſiderable learning, but, having no fire or imagination to animate it, was dull and unintereſting; and, when he attempted the gallantry which he conceived belonged to the colour of the coat which he wore, exhibited a ſtruggle, between the cold awkwardneſs of his nature and the gaiety which he endeavoured to aſſume, perfectly abſurd.—On the other

hand, Mr. Yapton, without ſenſe, knowledge, or manners, diſplayed a pert kind of empty foppery, more diſguſting in proportion to the confidence with which it was believed to be the airy eaſe of faſhion, triumphant over the pedantry of age.—In Colonel Fordingbridge there was profound information, and ſhrewd ſenſe; but in Mr. Yapton there was nothing to counterbalance his diſguſting folly.—Yet the ſtrangeſt inſtance of impudence was exhibited by this young hero in the mimickry and low kind of buffoonery with which he ſtrove to diſturb the riſible faculties of the company, at every converſation, upon any important topic.—Beſides theſe, there were a Scotch nobleman; two clergymen; an Eaſt-Indian; a clerk of one of the offices in

London; an artiſt; two country ſquires, of whom one was a Baronet; and four ladies, of whom three were young.

They who know the world muſt have obſerved how many ſchemes of gallantry are carried on, and how many opportunities are afforded, in large companies, particularly where the characters are various and unconnected; and the modern affectation of freedom and eaſe produces ſituations of which the deſign is not immediately developed, and any ſtrange appearance is carried off by raillery and laughter.

Mrs. Bracey was too well acquainted with all this; and the week was paſſed in a kind of hurry, riot, irregularity, and whim,

whim, at which grave people would indeed have trembled for their daughters, though young men, while they condemned, could not but occaſionally enjoy it.

But the ſimplicity and good diſpoſition of Jane St. Leger ſeemed hitherto to have kept her pure amid this ſociety.—It was impoſſible for her always to avoid the deſign by which ſhe was frequently ſeated next Fitz-Albini, or left alone with him: but, whether from diſinclination, or from the knowledge of his intentions regarding Miſs Pickman, which alone would have been ſufficient cauſe of reſerve to her, her conduct was particularly cautious, and her converſation reſtrained.—Once, indeed, ſhe complained

delicately of her diſtreſſing dependence on Mrs. Bracey, and her horror of her diſguſting character—and expreſſed ſentiments, which at once did honour to her heart and her underſtanding.—Fitz-Albini felt his pity very ſtrongly excited; but he recollected that pity was a dangerous paſſion for him to indulge towards ſuch an object at this critical time.

Jane St. Leger had obſerved in Fitz-Albini a greatneſs of ſentiment, and a kind of lofty underſtanding which ſhe often admired—but her good ſenſe had remarked ſo much deceit, and want of principle, in moſt of the men ſhe had ſeen amongſt Mrs. Bracey's acquaintance, notwithſtanding their occaſional profeſſions, that ſhe did not by any means put full

confidence

confidence in his character—and ſhe was not always ſure that he received the advances of Mrs. Bracey with the diſapprobation he pretended.

Gaiety, frolic, and noiſe, marked the conviviality of the week. Miſs Halton was the favourite of the lively; Miſs Fleetwood, of the ſentimental; and Miſs Dormer, of the fox-hunters, a kind of gentlemen who are well known to come under neither of thoſe characters; while Jane St. Leger, with beauty above them all, having no fineſſe, affectation, or aſſumption, attracted leſs attention, and fewer followers, though ſometimes unwilling homage was paid to her ſeductive perſon.

Miſs Halton had been educated in London; was accompliſhed in all the petty arts of dancing, languages, muſic, and drawing; knew and employed the ſhops of the moſt faſhionable milliners, and other dealers in ladies' dreſs; had frequented all the public places; and been introduced at the moſt faſhionable aſſemblies of the year; and was acquainted with all thoſe petty topics, thoſe ſcandalous anecdotes, and thoſe forward and vain characters, which were the reigning ſubjects of the year among the inſignificant and contemptible beings who ridiculouſly call themſelves "*The "World.*"—She poſſeſſed a confidence and ready pertneſs, which was miſtaken for vivacity and wit, and a ſhowy appearance, derived from the artifices of her

her dreſs, which were miſtaken for beauty.—She affected the airs of rank, though nothing could be lower than her birth—and pre-eminence of underſtanding and knowledge of life; though nothing could be more ſhallow and ſtupid than ſhe was, and nothing more ignorant, except in a little of the ſurface of the petty forms of the narrow circle in which ſhe moved.

Miſs Fleetwood was a *Blue-Stockings*—She was acquainted with all the reigning authors; could tell the poems, plays, and novels, that were coming out the next winter; and moralized upon books, and men, in ſuch tinſel and tedious language as to give a diſguſt to literature,

and make Genius aſhamed of its occupations.

Miſs Dormer was totally free from the affectation of the other two.—She was large, handſome, gay, and talkative; not without a tolerable underſtanding, and moderately-poliſhed manners.

Lord Carnwarth was of the antient nobility of Scotland, but of ſmall fortune; a ſoldier of plain underſtanding, and manly manners, who had led a life of activity and hardſhip in the ſervice of his country—and by a generous frankneſs, and the eſteem ariſing from reflection on his military character, was every where intereſting and beloved. The contraſt of his character to that of Mr.

Baugham,

Baugham, the Eaſt-Indian, a man rolling in riches, but crafty, vulgar, and mean, and betraying in every word and action his ſordid origin, was particularly ſtriking—while the women, paying their homage one while to rank, and another to wealth, were held in ſolicitous doubt of which to make their final preference.

But yet none of them could bear the ſlighteſt appearance of admiration paid to Jane St. Leger, even by the other men of the party: and the attentions of Sir Thomas Bulmer, and Mr. Stydolfe, were claimed and occupied, with peculiar ſolicitude, by Mrs. Dormer, for her daughter.

In the colliſion of this ſociety, the character of Fitz-Albini had gradually obtained a tacit ſuperiority, unwillingly felt. He was particularly hated by Colonel Fordingbridge, who, fancying in himſelf the attractions of youth, and believing the other to engroſs too much of the converſation of Miſs St. Leger, reſolved to place himſelf on one ſide of her at table; while the other, by Mrs. Bracey's contrivance, was always occupied by Fitz-Albini.

Fitz-Albini occaſionally addreſſed himſelf to her, whoſe ſenſe he found ſo much above that of her companions—but Mrs. Bracey herſelf managed principally to engage him. Nor was the opportunity loſt by Colonel Fordingbridge, who

who exerted all his powers of pleaſing; but ſometimes found Miſs St. Leger cold, and ſometimes abſent. He at length determined to excite her attention by all the powers he poſſeſſed; and was relating a ſtory of ſome intereſt, and flattered himſelf ſhe was liſtening, when, as Mrs. Bracey was engaged in a converſation with Fitz-Albini, ſhe turned ſuddenly pale, then red, and, in apparent agitation, haſtened out of the room.

The incident did not paſs without the ſmiles and ſneers of the women, which were not a little increaſed when ſhe returned to it, with her eyes evidently ſwollen with tears. Col. Fordingbridge was ſullen and gloomy; and Fitz-Albini looked anxious and alarmed: but Miſs

St.

St. Leger, while ſhe ſeemed anxious to recover the appearance of compoſure, ſhrunk involuntarily from the enquiries and attentions of both.

Yet Mrs. Bracey obſerved ſomething in Fitz-Albini's manner to her, which made her think that ſhe might now invite the Pickman family to dinner, with ſufficient probability of their returning mortified.—They were accordingly engaged to join the preſent party at Orleton.—Miſs Pickman entered with hope and pleaſure; nor through the day did ſhe diſcover any ſtrong ſymptoms of diſappointment.

The next morning (for they ſlept that night at Orleton), Miſs Pickman, with almoſt

almoſt the whole party in the houſe, ſallied forth to take a walk.—They had not proceeded far, when the reſt, as if by deſign, lingered behind, and left Fitz-Albini and Miſs Pickman to proceed by themſelves.

"There they go," ſaid Miſs Halton; "I am glad of it! poor vulgar things, "juſt fit for each other!"

"When are they to be married?" ſaid Mr. Yapton.—"Oh dear! don't aſk me," ſhe replied—"do you think I keep a re-"giſter of the marriages of country "ſquires?" Then, ſeeing Sir Thomas Bulmer at her elbow, ſhe turned it off, with ſomething between a toſs and a laugh.—

"Fitz-Albini

"Fitz-Albini is the moſt odious, in-
"ſufferable fellow, I ever met with,"
ſaid Mr. Baugham.—

"He is, indeed," ſaid Mr. Stydolfe.
—"I would venture my bay mare
"againſt Tom Sidenham's old blind
"hackney, if I were to take him out for
"a whole winter together with my
"hounds, at the end of the winter he
"would not know one dog from an-
"other."—

"And then he knows nothing of the
"gay world," ſaid Mr. Yapton; "he
"was never in the militia in his life!"—

"He is a quiz and a milkſop," ſaid
Mr. Grinſted, a young clergyman; "for,
"though

" though he lives within ſix miles of our
" club at Gangham-lane, he has never
" been once there; and refuſed to be a
" member, though you, Stydolfe, once
" offered to propoſe him!"

" So I did, my boy, replied Stydolfe;
" but how d—d lucky we were he did
" not accept it!"

" But he is a ſenſible fellow, and a
" fine-ſpirited fellow, for all that," ſaid Lord Carnwarth.—

" A little too proud, and ſelf-ſufficient," ſaid Colonel Fordingbridge, dryly.

" A hypocrite," ſaid Mr. Baugham,
" profligate, though ſly"—

" Somewhat

"Somewhat fickle, and ſomewhat "mercenary!" ſaid Miſs Fleetwood, with affected calmneſs.

"O, we women like a little of the "rake; do we not, Miſs St. Leger?" ſaid Miſs Dormer.

"I hope not," replied Miſs St. Leger, in confuſion.

"A very pretty match, I think," ſaid Sir Thomas Bulmer; "the arms of Sir "James Pickman, Knight, citizen, buff-"belt-maker, banker, and Baronet, "will add a very uſeful blot to the "'ſcutheon of that haughty old ſquare-"toes of Dallington."

"And

"And the lady too—ſee, how fond "ſhe is!" ſaid Miſs Halton. "I pro-"teſt, ſhe has lived in theſe very charm-"ing ſolitudes till ſhe fancies herſelf "abſolutely in love. See how ſhe hangs "upon his arm—do but obſerve, my "dear Miſs St. Leger! I proteſt, it is "very entertaining!—I would give a "great deal, if our ſweet friend Mrs. "Bracey was but here at this moment—"would not you, my dear?—Oh, do "look, pray look! What a pretty pa-"thetic tale! What pretty ſentiments "ſhe muſt be telling him! I dare ſay, "he is vaſtly delighted!"

"Yes, yes," added Colonel Fording-bridge; "the proud fellow, I warrant "you,

"you, likes better to receive homage "than to pay it."—

At that moment Mrs. Bracey overtook the party: ſhe partly heard, as well as ſaw, the ſubjects of their converſation: ſhe came panting, and out of breath; and had ſcarce time to addreſs any body, before ſhe gave a piercing ſhriek—exclaimed, "O the wretch! O the brute!" and ſunk back, as if in a fainting fit, into the arms of Colonel Fordingbridge; from which ſhe did not ſeem to recover without much difficulty, and many attentions; while thoſe who ſurrounded her were ſtaring at each other, ſome with repreſſed ſmiles, and ſome with real terror—and, amongſt the reſt, Jane

St. Leger, to whom ſhe ſeemed to direct her calls for aſſiſtance, as if ſhe had been her ſervant, between fright, vexation, and concealed diſguſt, appeared in an agitation a thouſand times more real than her own.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

FITZ-ALBINI and Miſs Pickman knew nothing of what had paſſed. Yet, when they joined the party again, they perceived ſomething ſtrange in the countenances of all, which not a little diſtreſſed them.

Mrs. Bracey had retired again, to meditate revenge; for which ſhe cared not what ſacrifices ſhe made, nor what miſchief ſhe produced.

Miſs Pickman felt her delicacy alarmed; and the mind of Fitz-Albini appeared

peared to work with a mixture of doubt, anger, ſorrow, diſguſt, and mortification.—A cloud hung over his countenance, which kept in awe thoſe who had ſpoken ſo freely behind his back. He joined the converſation only by fits; and contradicted occaſionally with an aſperity and ſcorn, which were by no means the character of his heart. But now, alas! he was peculiarly awake to affronts; for, conſcious he was falling into a ſcheme formed by others, which his own boſom did not juſtify, he felt leſſened in his own eſteem. He watched, therefore, and ſometimes miſinterpreted the manners and the looks of his companions; and was ever ready to take fire at a doubtful expreſſion, or an innocent ſmile.

Miſs Pickman, who was, or fancied herſelf, deeply attached to him, had not the reſolution to reſent the coldneſs, and even rudeneſs with which he now treated her: but ſometimes purſued him with a ſtrange faithfulneſs, and ſometimes ſat overwhelmed in ſilent ſorrow, when he ſhunned her.—When he talked to Mrs. Bracey, ſhe was diſguſted with the woman; but it raiſed no jealouſy. The beauty and attractions of Jane St. Leger were more alarming to her: if he addreſſed his converſation, or even by chance turned his eyes upon her, ſhe felt an inſtant depreſſion at her heart, and a trembling convulſion over her whole frame. Perhaps this was not perceived by Fitz-Albini, whom it did not ſeem to become, to inflict ſuch cruel pain; yet

yet he appeared now rather to ſeek than avoid theſe converſations, which, yet, ſhe could not often accuſe Miſs St. Leger of encouraging, who was, however, now and then gradually drawn into ſome long and intereſting diſcuſſion, artfully fomented by Mrs. Bracey, in the eagerneſs of which ſhe for ſome time forgot herſelf, and alternately liſtened and replied with too apparent delight, till the evident diſtreſs of Miſs Pickman revived her prudence and forbearance.

At theſe moments Fitz-Albini's ſpirits broke forth from the weight and the gloom that at other times totally overwhelmed him. When they ceaſed, he ſunk again; and kept a moody kind of reſerve and ſilence, which rendered his

manners rude, repreſſing, and, to moſt of the company, almoſt hateful. Many of the women rallied Miſs Pickman on the ſtrangeneſs of her choice, and attempted to excite her revenge at his inſulting neglect. At the ſame time, Sir Thomas Bulmer and Mr. Yapton were as aſſiduous as Fitz-Albini was cold.—But love is a perverſe deity: their aſſiduities were as diſguſting to her as his coldneſs was painful.

Yet occaſionally Fitz-Albini ſeemed conſcious of his own rudeneſs, and endeavoured to force a ſmile into his melancholy countenance, and to ſoften the tones of his voice into tenderneſs, when it was directed to her; which ſhe received with too apparent delight, and which only

only rendered his returning fits of ſullen and mournful ſilence more afflicting to her.

Meanwhile Colonel Fordingbridge urged his ſuit to Miſs St. Leger, with a kind of impudent perſeverance, from which, though ſhe ſhrunk with abhorrence from it, ſhe could not always free herſelf. In her own room, and in lonely walks, ſhe often ſought for ſafety from his importunities; while her delicacy was particularly ſhocked at a kind of confidence, and ſelf-ſatisfaction, which he diſplayed in his manner to her, whenever he met her in the preſence of others, as if ſhe gave encouragement to his attentions. And whether in compliment to the finer feelings, the penetration, or

the ſeverity, of Fitz-Albini; in his preſence ſhe always felt more peculiarly hurt at the ſtyle of addreſs of Colonel Fordingbridge.—It was thus that in aſcending the ſtaircaſe, Fitz-Albini heard the voice of the Colonel engaged in an eager converſation with her, when, as he opened the door into the gallery, where they were, ſhe inſtantly flew towards him, and, for a moment, ſeemed to catch his arm, pale and trembling, as if for protection, yet not uttering a word; and then ſuddenly, as if recollecting herſelf, ſprang away again, and diſappeared till dinner time. Fitz-Albini, ſurprized, ſtood for a few moments motionleſs; and, before he had time to reflect upon it, Colonel Fordingbridge, after caſting

upon

upon him a frown of angry vengeance, departed the other way.

As ſoon as Miſs St. Leger had time to meditate upon the incident, the fiery tempers both of Fordingbridge and Fitz-Albini recurred to her mind; and ſhe became miſerable at the probability of a quarrel between them. In this ſhe was confirmed, when, about an hour afterwards, ſhe ſaw from her window Fitz-Albini walking in a hurried ſtep in the park, with a lettter in his hand, which, after peruſing and re-peruſing ſeveral times, he ſeemed to tear to pieces in a rage, and throw ſcornfully from him. She watched his motions with ſome ſolicitude, till he diſappeared in the moſt diſtant parts of the park. She then

felt a pang and a terror ſhe had never before experienced. She had often obſerved the moodyneſs of his mind: ſhe felt a horror of ſhe knew not what: ſhe felt a momentary impulſe to go after him; but inſtantly recollected the impropriety of it: it then ſtruck her, that ſhe ought to go to Miſs Pickman; but in a moment her heart recoiled from it; and, for the firſt time, the very idea of Miſs Pickman gave a cold ſick ſenſation at her heart, totally different from any feeling ſhe had ever before known. She ran and liſtened at the door of Colonel Fordingbridge's room; and, as ſoon as ſhe was convinced that he was there, ſhe returned to her own chamber more eaſy, and, after having watched half an hour at her window, at length ſaw Fitz-Albini

ſlowly

ſlowly returning by the path he had gone, and followed him with her eyes ſafely to the door of the houſe, when ſhe became more calm, and began to dreſs herſelf for dinner.

Miſs Pickman, with ſome ſenſe and exertion, endeavoured to fortify her mind to bear the mortifications of a paſſion which ſhe found ſhe could not ſubdue, and hoped that the caprices, as ſhe believed them, of a triumphant vanity would ſoon be overcome by the more brilliant and virtuous qualities of the head and heart of Fitz-Albini; and that her conſtancy, her endeavours to make him happy, and the advantages of the fortune ſhe ſhould bring him, would gradually raiſe his gratitude, which ſhe

muſt be content to let time ripen into love. The chilling ſenſations of neglect, the tortures of jealouſy, ſhe reſolved, if ſhe could not conquer, to hide.

Thus fortified, ſhe entered the drawing-room before dinner. Many of the party were already there; Fitz-Albini among the reſt. He came up ſooner than he was wont to do, with a collected careleſſneſs of manner, which ſurprized and pleaſed her; though to one or two more acute obſervers it ſeemed too like deſpair to be very flattering.—He entered into a converſation, which, though it was cold, calm, and conciſe, yet was ſo much longer than was uſual, that the change in his conduct drew general ob-

ſervation—Mrs. Bracey ſeemed in a perfect fever.

Miſs St. Leger had not yet joined the party. She now entered the room: an alternate glow and paleneſs in her countenance ſeemed to indicate ſome hurry of ſpirits; but, added to a peculiarly becoming dreſs, gave a beauty to her appearance beyond what ſhe had ever diſplayed before. Her addreſs ſeemed a little embarraſſed; and thoſe who watched her looks might have ſeen, as ſhe gradually turned her eyes round the room, a ſudden paleneſs as they came to the corner where Fitz-Albini was engaged with Miſs Pickman, and whence again ſhe inſtantly averted them.

At dinner, if Miſs Pickman was placed on one ſide of Fitz-Albini, Mrs. Bracey was determined that Miſs St. Leger ſhould occupy the other; notwithſtanding the diſtreſs of the latter, who felt doubly alarmed by the fiery looks of Colonel Fordingbridge, already, as ſhe feared, ſufficiently enraged.

The buſineſs of this amiable girl was, therefore, if poſſible, to keep peace; and, by an endeavour at general converſations, of which Fitz-Albini and Fordingbridge were both ſo capable, to prevent jealouſies and animoſities, which the ſmalleſt ſpark would kindle into a flame. She made ſeveral attempts in vain. Miſs Pickman, whoſe mind had never received that kind of cultivation, looked

looked mortified and unhappy.—This checked her for a time. But Colonel Fordingbridge having thrown out ſeveral taunting reflections, of which, though ſhe was not ſure Fitz-Albini heard them, yet, from a deep and increaſing gloom that ſhe ſaw in his expreſſion, ſhe feared the effects; ſhe again challenged his attention by ſome obſervations, expreſſed with uncommon elegance, as well as the moſt engaging timidity, upon a ſubject on which ſhe knew he was very fond of expatiating: this was, the poetical merits and defects of Pope. Perhaps there was nothing new or peculiarly acute in what ſhe ſaid. But the beauty of the perſon from whom it came, the manner, and the propriety of it, made it appear irreſiſtibly engaging, and awakened the

whole

whole ſoul of Fitz-Albini, who caſt upon her a look of mingled aſtoniſhment, admiration, and pleaſure.

"Certainly, Miſs St. Leger," ſaid he, after a long ſilence, "there are few "ſubjects of criticiſm more difficult "than to aſcertain the merits of this ex-"traordinary poet. When we read the "Eloiſa to Abelard; the Elegy on an "Unfortunate Lady; and the Rape of "the Lock; we are inclined to allow "him the full praiſe of genius. Yet a "large proportion of his works is ſurely "deficient in all the higher qualities of "poetry. No ſatire, no good ſenſe, no "knowledge of the world, no excellent "moral axiom, however clear and po-"liſhed be the language, and however

"har-

"harmonious be the verſification in "which they are cloathed, can deſerve "the praiſe of ſuch a name. Poetry "muſt touch the ſoul by its ſubli-"mity, or its pathos, or it muſt "fill the fancy by its imagery."—He was going on, when he was rudely and contemptuouſly interrupted by Colonel Fordingbridge.

"What," cried he, addreſſing himſelf to Miſs St. Leger, "are theſe ſublime "whims that Fitz-Albini has got into "his head? The wild notions of a "boy! the ſickly dreams of a ro-"mance-reader! Give me the ſterling "ſenſe of Pope, and I care not what "becomes of your tinſel deſcriptions, "and your whining complaints! Thank

"God,

"God, I am paſt my childhood! I "can reliſh the ſolid food of the mind! "But,"—pauſing a moment, as if to recollect himſelf, and then anticipating by his manner a triumph which he believed would be deciſive,—"I ſhould "like to aſk the gentleman, what Pope's "writings are, if they are not poe-"try!"

The countenance of Fitz-Albini fired, and Miſs St. Leger grew pale, at the ſhock of having kindled freſh ſparks of contention, where ſhe had endeavoured to appeaſe. "Colonel Fordingbridge's "age," he replied ſarcaſtically, "is a "lucky excuſe for a coldneſs of taſte, "which, I dare ſay, was the ſame at "twenty-two, as it is now at fifty-ſeven!

"The

" The queſtion he ſo triumphantly puts,
" as if it was unanſwerable, ſeems to be
" an humble imitation of a paſſage in
" Dr. Johnſon's life of that poet, which
" itſelf is not ſo convincing, as the
" haughtineſs with which it is aſked
" implies. ' If Pope,' ſays that critic,
" ' is not a poet, where is poetry to
" ' be found?' However the queſtion
" be determined, the anſwer to this is
" ſurely very obvious. Who is not
" prepared to anſwer with the names of
" Homer and Virgil, of Dante, Arioſto,
" Chaucer, Taſſo, Spenſer, Shakſpeare,
" and Milton? Poets, who, however
" highly the merits of Pope may be eſti-
" mated, muſt be allowed to bear a
" very ſlight ſimilitude to him!"

" Sir,"

"Sir," ſaid Colonel Fordingbridge, "the humble imitation with which you "tax me I ſcorn—I ſcorn to imitate "any man—Dr. Johnſon was a great "critic, and the coincidence you men-"tion is a more flattering compliment "to me than any contemptuous language "of yours can counterbalance. But you "heroic gentlemen ſoar ſo much above "us people of plain underſtanding, that "I confeſs myſelf incapable of purſuing "your flights!"

"They are flights, ſir," replied Fitz-Albini, with an angry voice, and fiery eye, "that I do not wonder you "deſpiſe, when I recollect that it is "the property of dull ———."

Here

Here he ſuddenly ſtopped: they, who were watching the diſpute, having for ſome time obſerved the diſtreſſed countenance of Miſs St. Leger, ſaw her at this moment venture to give him a look of mixed agony and entreaty, which inſtantly ſoftened his tone:—"I "beg your pardon," he continued, "I "had almoſt made too haſty an obſer-"vation. I mean to ſay, that a taſte for "the more temperate productions of ra-"tiocination is generally attended with "a ſelf-complacence, which does not "characterize the votaries of imagi-"nation."

"I underſtand you, ſir," returned Colonel Fordingbridge, who had not paſſed unobſerved the look of Miſs St. Leger,

Leger, and the ſudden change of Fitz-Albini's tone and words—"another time "and place will be more proper for "this diſcuſſion."

"I think ſo too, ſir!" added Fitz-Albini, very calmly; at which Miſs Pickman, who yet ſcarcely underſtood the matter, turned very pale—but Miſs St. Leger caſt her eyes alternately on the two diſputants, with looks of the moſt inexpreſſible grief and horror; while the greater part of the company were highly entertained; and Mrs. Bracey in particular was ſo much pleaſed, that ſhe could not wait for the opportunity to expreſs her delight, but as ſoon as poſſible roſe to withdraw with the ladies,

that

that ſhe might talk over the high ſun in another room, and imagine what a pretty paragraph the affair would make in the news-papers; and what a conſpicuous figure the deſcription of the party at Orleton would make in the world.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

THE remainder of the time, till the gentlemen were ſummoned to tea, was ſomewhat embarraſſed. In the drawing-room, Miſs Pickman, whom, after the firſt alarm, ſome of the party had had the good-nature to ſatisfy and appeaſe, endeavoured in vain, by all the powers of attraction ſhe could uſe, to draw Fitz-Albini to converſe with her; while, though ſilent and gloomy by fits, he at other moments excited a general and entertaining converſation, in which his peculiar energy and eloquence engaged

gaged the attention of the whole room. But Miſs St. Leger was abſent; and they, who watched him with a malignant curioſity, ſaw his eyes turned to the door whenever it opened, and his mind at thoſe times, if he was talking, evidently bewildered.

As ſoon as cards and ſupper were over, he was retiring with eagerneſs to his room; when, in one of the apartments through which he paſſed, he ſaw a figure, which he ſoon knew to be Miſs St. Leger, ſitting near the window, as if contemplating the moon. She roſe on his approach, and coming forward to meet him, he ſaw her agitation, and the tears, which ſhe could ill ſuppreſs.

"Mr.

"Mr. Fitz-Albini," ſhe ſaid, with a tremulous voice, "I know I am incur-
"ring the appearance of impropriety in
"waiting for you ſecretly here, as I
"certainly have been;—but I believe I
"have been the means, though unin-
"tentionally, of drawing you into a
"quarrel with Colonel Fordingbridge,
"which makes me perfectly wretched.
"I know I have no right to influence
"you; nor to aſk or expect you would
"ſacrifice what is deemed honour, or a
"juſt feeling of reſentment, for my
"ſake. But, when you recollect it was
"to prevent, inſtead of creating, a diſ-
"pute with a fiery and ill-tempered
"man, that I began the converſation,
"which has been the cauſe of this un-
"fortunate affair, I appeal to your ge

" nerosity for — — for — —," hesitating, and, for a moment, lifting up her beautiful eyes, which were drowned in tears, and instantly withdrawing them again, " — for the good intentions I had,— " to induce you to make a little sacrifice " of fooliſh punctilios, and some small " effort at a peaceful termination of an " affair, which will otherwise sink me " into wretchedness for life."

Surprize, admiration, and tenderness, overwhelmed Fitz-Albini for some moments: he stood silent, and motionless: she trembled, and turned pale, and even fell on her knees, and, with uplifted hands, cried, " I intreat you, sir, I most " earnestly intreat you, to —— !" He recovered from his astonishment; and,

inſtantly raiſing her up, interrupted her, "For Heaven's ſake, Miſs St. Leger," he ſaid, "do not diſtreſs me ſo! do not, "I beſeech you, do not put this inſuf- "ferable trial upon me! do not aſk "what to *you* —— but forgive me—I "know not what I ſay—there is madneſs "in all this! How my brain beats!— "my father!—my father!" Then, turning his eyes upon her—"but do "*you* aſk it? If *you* aſk! what! though "diſgrace and ruin attend it, what can "I ref - - - yet let me fly from you!" attempting to withdraw his hand, which Miſs St. Leger now held faſt, while her fright at his unaccountable diſtraction overcame all other reflections.— "Mr. Fitz-Albini," ſhe ſaid, in a tender tremulous voice, "be calm! I

"did

" did not mean to agitate you! Far,
" very far, indeed, from it, as Heaven
" is my witneſs! I only have intreated,
" and ſtill intreat, that a life ſo good,
" ſo valuable as yours, may not be put
" in danger by means of a being ſo
" inſignificant, and ſo wretched as I!"

" Do not ſpeak ſo tenderly, Miſs St.
" Leger, I intreat; leſt I ſhould be un-
" done for ever! Call me a villain, as
" I am; and I can bear it—but this
" ſoftneſs, this angelic goodneſs—this
" beauty!" turning his ſoftened eyes upon her, and lifting her hand to his lips. — This ſhe ſcornfully withdrew, and ſaid, in an altered tone of voice, " Forbear, ſir! I thought Mr. Fitz-
" Albini had been too generous to inſult

" her, whoſe innocent anxiety for his " ſafety gave him the opportunity !"— Her colour inſtantly fled, and ſhe could ſcarce ſupport herſelf but by leaning againſt the window; and in a moment ſunk on the chair, and fainted.

In a few minutes ſhe recovered, and ſilently and tremblingly withdrew, while Fitz-Albini ſtood immerſed in a conflict of feelings, which rendered him incapable of uttering a word.—But this interview, and the ſenſations Fitz-Albini experienced during the ſhort period Miſs St. Leger ſat lifeleſs on the chair, ſunk into the bottom of his heart, and made impreſſions his future life could not efface.

The

The next day, Fitz-Albini, after having diſcovered ſuch evident rudeneſs to Miſs Pickman as rouſed her ſlow reſentment, and having had a correſpondence of ſeveral letters with Colonel Fordingbridge, withdrew to his father's houſe at Dallington.

His father he found ſinking under anxiety, and the rapid progreſs of age; but not a little ſolicitous to hear of the ſucceſs of his attentions to the family of Pickman. The painful taſk Fitz-Albini had here to perform; the difficulty of evaſion, and his incapability of a falſehood, rendered his ſituation truly uneaſy.

A new train of feelings occupied his boſom, and gave a tinge to all the objects

around him. The ſun went down with a deeper crimſon, and the ſhades of the foreſt aſſumed a richer hue. The mighty charms of Nature, the winds, the agitated air, the ſcattered leaves, the bending, groaning trees, and the ſweeping clouds, ſeemed to brace his frame, and at once ſoothe, and elevate his ſoul.

O what is wealth, in pride of heart he ſaid,
Compar'd with you, ye treaſures of the mind?
O what the tinſel toys, in which array'd,
The rich man ſtrives the eye of Senſe to blind?
In theſe refreſhing lawns, this haunted ſhade,
How oft has Fancy ſplendid forms deſign'd;
Whoſe gleams before th' enraptur'd ſight diſplay'd,
Would leave the glare of Eaſtern Kings behind!

Can

Can Wealth, the head to form, the heart to feel,
The ſoul, that lifts the man to Heaven, beſtow?
The power, from Grief, Scorn, Malice, to appeal,
And loſe, in dreams of bliſs, Revenge's blow?—
No fears then, Poverty, can'ſt thou inſpire,
Give but the vigorous head, the ſoul entire!

In theſe ſolitary wanderings, he fortified his mind with ſuch a conviction of the ſuperiority of intellectual endowments above all worldly advantages, that he felt a dignity and conſolation under any mortifications and difficulties, which it was not eaſy to ſhake. Yet, when he entered the houſe, and found it was impoſſible to alter the opinions of his father, his fortitude and his conviction could not always ſupport him; becauſe, whilſt thoſe opinions remained, his fa-

ther's happineſs depended upon ſome conformity to them; and to that happineſs he could not be indifferent. For, it is a melancholy reflection, that, after we have purified our ſentiments, and exalted our minds above ordinary paſſions, we are often debarred of the content and happineſs, which ought to be our reward, by a want of ſimilar refinement in thoſe with whom it is our lot to be nearly connected, and whoſe peace and enjoyments are almoſt as neceſſary to us as our own.

"My dear ſon," ſaid his father, "you "may rely upon it, theſe notions of "yours are carried too far. The advan- "tages of wealth, every where, but "particularly in this country, are incal- "culable. The antiquity, or the luſtre

"of

" of your family, will not outweigh the
" difference of a paltry 100*l.* a year in a
" neighbour, who but yeſterday bought
" the eſtate he lives upon, and ten years
" ago was a ſhoe-black. Your abilities, or
" your knowledge, will be of ſtill leſs
" eſtimation; or, what is yet worſe, will
" be reckoned againſt you; and a ſtupid
" fellow, who excites nobody's envy, be-
" cauſe all feel him their inferior in in-
" tellect, will be welcome, nay, courted
" and praiſed, where you are neglected
" and ſhunned. Your eccentricities
" will be watched, exaggerated, and
" ridiculed; your reſerve will be attri-
" buted to pride, for which you will
" not be allowed to have any tolerable
" foundation; your anceſtry, of which
" you have ſome fair ground to be vain,

" will be misrepresented, turned into
" some foolish contemptible jest, and
" even denied; the remnant of your
" fortunes will be treated with insult;
" your incumbrances aggravated; and
" your ruin anticipated, with a hellish
" delight. If you ever make a false
" step (and who, my dear son, can hope
" to walk through life without a devia-
" tion?) it will be pursued with a ma-
" lignity, of which you can at present
" have no conception.—Wretches, de-
" based by a whole life of depravity,
" without a single merit to counterba-
" lance it will grow consequential, wrap
" themselves up in their own virtue, and,
" passing by you with insult, will bless
" themselves that they are not such as
" you are.—Even our neighbour, Mr.
" Squeaker,

" Squeaker, that ſtrange mixture of a
" parrot and a baboon, with his ſhreds
" of Greek, and Latin, and French, and
" Italian, with his wretched avarice,
" and mean oſtentation; even he will
" dare to give himſelf airs to you;
" ſhrug his ſhoulders, and paſs you by
" as if he had never known you.—Your
" friend, Mr. Cherry himſelf, of whoſe
" heart you have truſted ſo much to the
" integrity, even he will liſten to the
" tales of your enemies, and fly with
" your 'ſummer friends.'—Your rela-
" tions, your near relations, who were
" wont to pay a deference to your ſen-
" timents, and be vain of your autho-
" rity, will, as ſoon as they believe you
" poor, turn their eyes from you with
" indifference, or contempt, and think

" the meaneſt mixture of ſcoundreliſm
" and folly, whoſe purſe is better filled
" than yours, to be more acceptable to
" their table, and their houſe."

" You paint, ſir," replied Arthur,
" the advantages of wealth, and the evils
" of poverty, in very ſtrong, and, I be-
" lieve, juſt colours; but there are other
" evils yet more dreadful than thoſe of
" poverty; and they who have only the
" choice of the two, muſt bear the leſs,
" with a fortitude which may ſoften,
" and perhaps overcome them."

" O Arthur," quickly anſwered his father, " contempt, neglect, and ſeclu-
" ſion, you have not yet experienced.—
" They are more galling than your ſpirit
" imagines.

" imagines. To be conſcious, as you
" muſt be, of ſo many ſuperior endow-
" ments, which the hiſtory of mankind
" has always taught us to be highly
" eſtimable; and yet, to find yourſelf
" inſulted, and treated with haughti-
" neſs, by the moſt deſpicable, the
" moſt inſipid, the very baſeſt dregs of
" ſociety! if you can brook this, you
" are almoſt above humanity!—But if,
" when riches are thrown in your way,
" all theſe motives are inſufficient to in-
" duce you to embrace the opportunity,
" think, my dear ſon, of me; think of
" your family; think of this hereditary
" manſion, which has ſurvived ſo many
" ſhocks, and been preſerved at ſo many
" ſacrifices of your anceſtors! Do you
" alone regard yourſelf of all this illuſ-

" trious race, and forego nothing for
" that poſterity, for which the regard of
" your forefathers has placed your birth
" in this beloved ſpot !"

" I would to Heaven, ſir," replied he, mournfully, " that that birth had never
" been ! It ſurely was attended with
" gloomy omens of misfortune and de-
" ſpair ! But, if the neglect of the
" world were all I had to contend with,
" my reſolution, I am ſure, would en-
" dure it patiently ; and perhaps my
" calmneſs and my ſmiles would turn
" the ſting of my perſecutors on them-
" ſelves. — Alas ! I have misfortunes
" more acute to bear ! the difference of
" your opinions ; your entreaties ; and
" your ſorrows !"

" My

"My ſorrows, Arthur, are for you!" he cried. "The ſanguine fancy of "youth paints the proſpect of your en- "joyments in fairy colours, which will "fade as you go forward, and leave you "no pleaſures ſufficiently ſtrong to "counterbalance the evils with which "you will be ſurrounded and oppreſſed. "You will then, too late, remember my "advice; and find what you now believe "to be the voice of crabbed age, is "Truth, diſcovered by Experience."

Arthur, awed by reſpect and love, and overwhelmed by the perplexity of his own feelings, found himſelf incapable of continuing the converſation; and, wiping off a tear which he could not ſuppreſs, turned his face to the window, and,

and, with his eyes fixed there, ſat for ſome time almoſt motionleſs. As ſoon as he could, he eſcaped from the room, and, with his head and his heart full of what had paſſed, his reſolution began to waver, though his ſentiments were not altered.

He ſeized his hat, and took a ramble in the air, to compoſe the perturbations of his mind. He ſallied forward with haſty ſteps, oppoſing his breaſt to the wind, which he thought blew ſpirits and fortitude upon him. But his ideas were ſtill perplexed; and the enjoyment of the ſcenery, which he loved, rendered ſtill more dreadful the thought of any misfortunes which would deprive him of it.

"What,"

"What," he thought, "have been "my crimes to be thus peculiarly marked "out for a misfortune, from which at "leaſt twenty generations of my anceſtors "have eſcaped; and which, had it hap- "pened to any one of them, would proba- "bly have not affected him in the tenth "degree it does me. They have all "been able to retain this eſtate: yet is "there one, whom the loſs of it would "have grieved as it would me? I "have often reflected with aſtoniſhment, "that through all the accidents of time; "in the ſtorms of civil war; and through "the chances of private imprudence, or "ill luck, mine, or any other family, "ſhould, in their adherence to the ſame "ſpot, ſurvive the ſhock of ſeveral cen- "turies! But it drives me almoſt to "diſtraction,

" diſtraction, that that good fortune
" which has fallen on ſo many ſhould
" fly from me alone! My beloved Dal-
" lington! perhaps I might yet retain
" you—but at what a price! Can I
" proſtitute my perſon, and my affec-
" tions, and perjure myſelf at the holy
" altar! Ye dear undebaſed roofs, I
" ſhould then ſleep under you no longer
" with pleaſure! Ye ſcenes of rural
" purity, I ſhould hate you, for the re-
" proaches you would awaken in my
" mind! In the luxury of riches I
" might torpify the reproaches of my
" ſoul by a dull ſenſual kind of pleaſure;
" but the torpor would not withſtand
" the impulſes of the imagery of Na-
" ture! and I ſhould then fly you, like
" a ſcorpion, becauſe you ſharpened my
" ſenſibility

" ſenſibility only to feel the chains from
" which I could not eſcape!"

He threw himſelf down on a bench; and ſeemed loſt in the diſtraction of his thoughts. The wind blew, and ſhook the boughs of the trees violently over his head; and ſcattered the leaves about him; the clouds gathered with an aweful gloom over his head; and evening haſtened rapidly on. He ſeemed a long while loſt in a dream;—he ſtarted, and looked to the diſtant, and indiſtinct gate of the Park; he thought he ſaw a crowd of figures entering it.—" Hark!" he exclaimed:

" O hark! See Ruin enters! By his ſide,
" O view the gaunt relentleſs fiends that ride!

" See

" See Peculation, and Perverted-Law,
" And bloated Wealth, whom hounds of Murder
" draw;
" Extortion, mounted on the pamper'd ſteed,
" Which the laſt tears of ſtarv'd Misfortune feed;
" And black Malignity, all dreſt in ſmiles;
" And Avarice, ſtriving to conceal his wiles:
" And yet an hundred harden'd imps behind,
" That feaſt upon the ſorrows of mankind!
" Hark, they approach!—Ye fiends of Hell,
" away!—
" Dear native fields, ye muſt not be their prey!
" Shades of my fathers, which the circling Sun,
" As twice three centuries his courſe he run,
" Has ſeen, in ſafety, o'er the faithful head
" Of the ſame race, your antient umbrage ſpread!
" Shall cruel hands pollute your dark retreats?
" Shall Infamy defile your ſacred ſeats?
" Ye lawns, on which my happy childhood
" play'd;
" Ye paths, where firſt my infant footſteps ſtray'd;
" Ye

" Ye boughs, which firſt I twiſted into bowers;
" Ye primroſe banks, where firſt I pick'd your
" flowers;
" Your long-lov'd charms ſhall foreign maſters
" own?
" Shall foreign ears inſult your ſlighted moan?
" Along your ſilent copſes, and your dells,
" Shall puff'd-up Folly ſhake her cap of bells?
" In name of Taſte direct the axe's blow,
" Laugh at your ſhrieks, and lay your glories low?
" Ye towers, that long have rais'd your heads
" ſublime,
" Firm and unſhaken, 'mid the ſtorms of Time!
" Ye halls, that oft with echoing ſounds have rung,
" When the rude minſtrels tales of heroes ſung;
" When Feaſt, and Hoſpitality, and roar
" Of Mirth went round, the genial goblet o'er;
" Where ſtill the blazing hearth, at Chriſtmas tide,
" The froſt and ſnow, and wind and rain, defy'd;
" And Eaſe at loaded boards, the village crew,
" Still to their lord in cloſer union drew!

" Ye

"Ye rooms, where poets nurs'd their golden
"dreams;
"Where ſtateſmen fram'd their country's glorious
"ſchemes;
"Where wits their brilliant rays were wont to
"dart,
"And Beauty's radiant forms to melt the heart!
"Shall the coarſe upſtart wretch, who never knew
"A thought beyond the figur'd ſpells, that drew
"The needy to Deſtruction's net, diſplay,
"Within your ſacred walls, a ſcoundrel's prey;
"New ſentiments; new modes of life unfold,
"Corrupt with luxury, and blaſt with gold!—
"Great God of Mercy! ſince it is a crime,
"To end this wretched life before its time;
"If the dire fiends at yonder gate I view,
"Be not mad Fancy's forms, but ſhapes too true,
"O now direct the pitying dart of Death,
"Aud in my native foreſts cloſe my breath!"

Such is the predominance of imagination in a poetical mind! It is often like

a

a temporary madneſs! He ſaw the dæmons of deſtruction already in the act of ſeizing upon the ſeat of his anceſtors.—But at length rouzing himſelf, he walked gently home, and gradually compoſed his ſpirits.

He found his father exhauſted with the exertion of a converſation, of which the ſubject preſſed deeply on his heart; and at times alarmingly ill. The ſilent, unobtruſive attentions of his mother were in vain directed to revive, or ſoothe him. The intervention of a ſleepleſs and miſerable night did not bring a morning of much comfort to Arthur.—His father was worſe; his mother had loſt her calmneſs. His uneaſineſs and his ſorrows were now truly bitter. A

gloom

gloom overſpread the houſe; the very ſervants caught the infection. He ſat in the dark old eating-room, wainſcotted with oak; and having piled up a blazing fire of wood on the hearth, leaned his burning forehead againſt the heavy projecting ſculptures of the chimney-piece, and ſat with half-ſhut eyes loſt in his muſings. A loud knock at the door rouzed him; followed by the ſound of a female voice, which in a ſhrill tone demanded entrance of the ſervant with ſuch a talkative vociferation, that in his confuſion ſhe had already got her hand upon the parlour-door, and half opened it before he could collect courage poſitively to enforce his denial. It was Mrs. Bracey, who, on the ſight of Arthur, flew forward, laughing at the ſucceſs of her own forwardneſs;

forwardneſs; and followed by Miſs St. Leger, who entered with trembling ſteps, and in much diſtreſs. Nothing could be more unwelcome than Mrs. Bracey's viſit at this time; even Miſs St. Leger's preſence could not counterbalance it. Some moments elapſed before he could recover his confuſion ſufficiently to make any anſwer to her volubility. But a wild look, and his eyes ſwollen with tears, ſeemed to fix the obſervation of Miſs St. Leger. At thoſe intervals, when ſhe could interpoſe her voice between the fluent harangues of her companion, in a ſoft, tremulous manner, ſhe put a few ſlight queſtions to Fitz-Albini, which yet ſo entirely withdrew from him the poſſibility of liſtening to Mrs. Bracey, that the latter began to be

offended, till, by ſome means, the image of Miſs Pickman recurred to her.

His colour began now to revive; his eyes to lighten: and an energetic intereſting manner to mark his converſation. He ſeemed to ſink again ſometimes for a moment or two; and to turn pale; and a ſigh to eſcape him; but, as he fixed his looks on Miſs St. Leger, he in an inſtant recovered himſelf. She diſplayed that morning beauty beyond what ſhe had ever ſhewn before: the air had given a glow to her complexion; and a very rapid ſucceſſion of paſſions appeared to give her countenance a variety of tender and intereſted expreſſions which rivetted his notice. Her ſilky auburn hair, her white hands, her graceful perſon,

round,

round, though ſlight, enchanted him: and his attentions became ſo very particular, and deciſive, for the firſt time, that ſhe at length began to feel ſome doubts and diſtreſſes; though ſhe could not altogether conceal from herſelf the pleaſure ſhe received.

On ſuch a day, when overwhelmed with domeſtic ſorrows, and life ſeemed to exhibit to him the moſt gloomy proſpects, it may be deemed ſtrange that his heart ſhould feel any vacancy for love. But, perhaps, it is by the exceſs of grief that it is moſt ſoftened and prepared for the tendereſt of the human paſſions. Whether it felt an increaſe from difficulties, or whatever was the cauſe, it is certain that it now raged in the breaſt of

Fitz-Albini with an impetuous flame. The anxious, yet delicate enquiries of Miſs St. Leger, regarding the diſpute with Colonel Fordingbridge, which had been terminated by a friend to both, with mutual ſatisfaction, and which had been driven from his mind by ſubjects ſo much more intereſting to him, now revived the impreſſion of her delightful diſpoſition, while it gave him an opportunity of removing a very heavy anxiety from her mind, very differently conſtructed from that of Mrs. Bracey, which was mortified at loſing the buſtle ſuch an event would create in the houſe, and the paragraphs it would cauſe in the news-papers.

Fitz-Albini ſeemed a little to ſink in the eſteem of Mrs. Bracey from the moment

ment he ceaſed to be the hero of a duel. And perhaps ſhe was vexed, that the pains ſhe had taken to inflame the anger of Colonel Fordingbridge had been fruitleſs. Yet this vexation, which ſufficiently betrayed itſelf in her countenance, and in two or three ſharp and aggravating remarks, gave no pain to Fitz-Albini, while he contemplated the heavenly temper and ſoftneſs of her companion. He gazed upon her in enchantment, and now dreaded, for the firſt time, the ſummons of the carriage, which was to rid him of Mrs. Bracey's company, ſince ſhe carried with her a treaſure whom he found it miſery to loſe.

"My dear Jane!" ſaid this amiable woman, as ſoon as the carriage began to

move from the door, "what is come to "Fitz-Albini? Did you ever ſee a man "ſo altered? Why, he has grown quite "a fright! Did you ever ſee ſuch a "moping, diſagreeable wretch as he was "to-day?"—Jane coloured, and ſat ſilent.—"I declare, he looked quite ugly! "His eyes red; his voice indiſtinct; his "hair diſheveled! I believe he was "drunk, or mad!"—"Surely, ſurely, "not," replied Jane, ſhocked, and indignant, yet in an embarraſſed voice,—"recollect, his father is very ill!"—"Father ill, indeed!" ſhe anſwered, with a ſhrill and ſharp contempt: "Well—"what if he is ill!—what if the old "don pops off—why, won't it be the "better for him?"—"But affection, "Mrs. Bracey!"—"Affection indeed! "whom

" whom for? what, an old ſurly old-
" faſhioned ſquare-toes! No, no—let
" him pop off, I ſay, tis time—pop off!"
in an hyſteric laugh.—Such were the tender, elegant, and wiſe ſentiments, of the faſcinating and amiable Mrs. Bracey. Nor did her expreſſions of reſentment of Fitz-Albini end here. She continued the converſation, and entertained poor Miſs St. Leger with her anger till the latter could not ſuppreſs her tears; tears which were yet mixed with a thouſand ſweet ſenſations, that gave a luxury to her ſorrows.

After their departure, Fitz-Albini was for a few moments loſt in the viſions of his fancy, which took a tincture from the impreſſions of his heart. But a

ſummons to his father's ſick chamber ſoon recalled his reaſon, and revived his grief.—His father ſeized his hand; and, while he claſped it, with an agonized affection—"Arthur, you ſee me very ill! "very ill indeed! I believe myſelf near "my end! Death will to me but cloſe "many years of increaſing ſolicitude and "ſorrow! cares, which have been the "more bitter, becauſe I have kept them "to myſelf. My concealment may have "been ill-judged: I now too much fear "it has been ſo: but it aroſe from the "kindeſt motives."—He was exhauſted, and pauſed:—"the cold chilling damps "of diſſolution are upon me—my death "will diſcover too much to you:—if it "be poſſible, retain Dallington,—and "do not curſe the memory of your "father!"

" father !"—He ſunk on his pillow, and fainted.—The attendants were ready—and Arthur, overcome with grief, retired to compoſe his convulſed ſpirits.

He ſobbed—he ſunk into a ſtupor—he revived—" *Retain Dallington, and do* " *not curſe the memory of thy father !*" vibrated on his ears; ſounds the moſt heart-breaking; the moſt coincident with all his former apprehenſions.—For two days he rambled about the houſe, with wild looks, and diſtracted thoughts. No other image but Deſpair preſented itſelf to his mind. Sleep fled his eyelids at night; and the fever of his brain was indeſcribably horrible.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the mean time, Fitz-Albini's father appeared ſomewhat to recover the powers of life; in conſequence of which his ſon's uneaſineſs began a little to abate. Arthur ſought to bathe his burning temples in the freſhneſs of the autumnal air. A ſoftened ſplendour inveſted the ſkies: a pure, and rather cold, wind ſtripped the trees rapidly of their leaves, which lay ſcattered every where upon the graſs. He felt his nerves in ſome degree braced; and the beauty of the ſcenery obtruded for a moment ſome images

images of pleaſure on his mind. But grief lay with too heavy a load at his heart, not ſoon to preſs away all other ſenſations, whoſe ſtrength had for a little while rouzed them under it. But the figure and the voice of Miſs St. Leger, ſuch as ſhe appeared the laſt time he ſaw her, now recalled itſelf to his ideas, and, while it added to the tenderneſs, embittered the agonies of his ſorrow.

Under grief ſo complicated, no wonder if the dæmons of deſpair ſometimes whiſpered to him the moſt horrible deeds! The fiends would ſometimes lead him to the banks of rivers; and ſometimes to the abrupt and precipitous heights of the Park.—But the recollection of his father, and his mother—his

fears of the future—the precepts of his religion, recalled his ſenſes.—His big and impetuous heart diſſolved into tears—he hurried away from the temptations of ſolitude to the protection of the houſe, and the ſight of the old ſervants, that loved and adored him. He dared not ſhew his wild and diſordered looks to his fond parents.

He could yet, at times, forget his ſufferings, in an eager attention to his books. He ſeized ſome mighty poet, or deep hiſtorian, and loſt himſelf for hours in abſtracted reflections. His ſoul freed itſelf from the narrow confines of its ſituation, and enjoyed a largeneſs of ſpace adapted to its powers. He ſaw not, he heard not the petty wrongs and

paſſions

paſſions of the petty people, with whom he had too often been forced into an intercourſe. While thus occupied, his ſpirits revived, his colour returned; and his countenance became relumed.

But that which was almoſt the only recreation of his diſturbed mind, was believed, by the ignorance of the ſervants, to be the cauſe of its diſeaſe. They attributed to his addiction to ſtudy that violent abſtraction and derangement, which they obſerved with the acuteſt pain; and therefore frequently broke in upon his attention with a tender officiouſneſs, at which he could not be angry, though he ſometimes regretted it. Yet it was very provoking often to have an airy caſtle, which his fancy

fancy had been building in a thouſand radiant colours, kicked down in a moment, and the whole charm diſſolved, by a coarſe and ignorant queſtion, however kind was the intention of it; at a time too, when to be awakened from the viſion was to be awakened to inexpreſſible miſery.

Under theſe deluſions he was often heard to mutter to himſelf; and it was thus that his ſentiments ſometimes cloathed themſelves extemporarily in unſought poetry, as the image of Miſs St. Leger preſented itſelf to his fancy:

I.

Thy form revives me, lovely maid,
Thine image glances croſs the ſhade,

And

And ſhews a gleam of joy!
Perchance the clouds, that gather round,
May not o'erhang the diſtant ground,
Nor diſtant hopes deſtroy:
Perchance the ray that breaks
From thy enchanting mien a happier omen ſpeaks.

II.

O days of ſoft delight,
Too little priz'd, when in thy ſight,
At Orleton's feſtive dome,
I paſs'd the dove-wing'd hours, and view'd
The beauties, on which now I brood,
As through theſe ſhades I roam!
O days, that come no more;
How fondly I regret your pleaſures now they 're o'er!

III.

O ſtay, ſweet Form;
My chilling proſpects warm;

Nor

Nor leave me thus a prey to dreary Woe!
O ſtay, ſweet Form, and calm
My beating breaſt, and pour a balm
Upon theſe wounds, no other cure can know!—
—Alas! the viſion flies;
And leaves me in deſpair to breathe my lonely
ſighs.

But who can deſcribe the eccentricities of a poet, under the influence of grief and love? Wan and drooping, "crazed "with care," and "muttering his way-"ward fancies," now ſlow, now rapid in his motions, to the vulgar he has always the appearance of inſanity. His impetuous ſteps, his loud ſighs, were generally heard with fear, and watched with anxiety, by the domeſticks. He ſometimes croſſed the gardener, or burſt upon the park-keeper, ſo frequently in the moſt

moſt ſolitary rambles of the park, that at laſt he began to ſuſpect ſome inſcrutable deſign. He ſpoke harſhly to them, which was ſo contrary to his uſual manner, that, when he came to reflect upon it, the greateſt pain it cauſed was to himſelf.

Yet the evil did not ceaſe here. The conduct which appeared to be deſigned, but inſcrutable, to Fitz-Albini, was of eaſier interpretation to thoſe goſſiping villagers, whoſe vacant curioſity is ever alive, and malignant, though ſtupid, invention always active. The park-keeper, a favourite of his maſter, who had long enjoyed a comfortable place, and many indulgences, which, while they enabled him to bring up a large family

in

in induſtrious comfort, had excited the envy of his neighbours, had a daughter on the verge of ſeventeen, of a pretty, ſimple countenance, and modeſt, quiet, unaſſuming manners. This girl, who frequently was paſſing from the lodge, in which her father reſided, in a diſtant part of the park, to the "*great houſe*" (as the common people call it), for ſome of thoſe little articles of milk or garden-ſtuff which are accuſtomed to be allowed to ſuch a family, was often croſſed by Fitz-Albini in his lonely walks, but ſometimes, in his fits of abſtraction, unſeen, and never with any other than the common notice to a diſtant curteſy.

But the rural neighbours choſe to think, or to tell otherwiſe. They had marked

marked the park-keeper "*dog*" (as they termed it) "*the young ſquire.*" And they were not ſlow in finding a reaſon for it. Many days had not paſſed, before it was confidently reported over the village, that Fitz-Albini had had a baſe deſign upon the virtue of the keeper's daughter, which had been the real motive of his ſecret wanderings; that he had already been too ſucceſsful; and that the father was watching to detect him, not that he might ſave the innocence of his injured child, but that he might extort money from the cruel offender.

This diabolical ſcandal firſt opened itſelf in whiſpers, with ſhrugs, and expreſſions of ſorrow; but ſhortly became more open, ſpread wider, with a thouſand

ſand circumſtances of exaggeration; and in leſs than a week was not only in the kitchens and ſervants' halls, but alſo in the dining-rooms and drawing rooms of every houſe in the neighbourhood, and even county.

The girls, whom Fitz-Albini's neglect or character had offended, giggled, and rejoiced. The country-ſquires, the parſons, and the Eaſt-Indians, in various ways expreſſed their triumph.—But by far the moſt malignant were the old women of all deſcriptions; yet more particularly thoſe who had been diſappointed in their own views of a marriage between Fitz-Albini and their own daughters.

That

That they, whoſe ſluggiſh underſtandings are incapable of any other exertion, ſhould yet always be ready at the invention or improvement of a falſehood, by which the character of a neighbour is aſperſed, may ſeem ſtrange to the candid and philanthropic; but, ſtrange as it may appear, all the acute obſervers of human nature muſt confeſs it to be too true. Nor will it ſeem leſs ſtrange to the ſuperficial, that it is with more peculiar virulence that the blaſt of Calumny attacks thoſe, whoſe intellectual accompliſhments, and innocent, and even praiſe-worthy, habits of life ought to protect them by awe and reverence.

Poor Fitz-Albini! No ſooner was thy name whiſpered by the breath of Defamation,

Defamation, than all the hounds of Envy and Malice opened in full cry upon thee! Folly ſounded her horn in triumph, and re-doubled the echoes of their tongues; and Revenge waved her cap, and pointed the unerring track to their devoted prey!

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

THE tale was not long ere it reached the houſe of Sir James Pickman. On the father, coarſe, groſs, and without any of the finer ſenſations of morality, it made no other impreſſion, than a fear of the pecuniary embarraſſments in which ſuch habits might hereafter involve his future ſon-in-law. The ears of the daughter it did not immediately reach; till, by ſome ſlight hints of her waiting-maid, and till, by ſome *prettily-feigned* exclamations of mixed pity and anger at "poor Mr. Fitz-Albini," her awakened

awakened curioſity eaſily drew forth the whole of the wonderful ſtory. It would not be difficult to repeat the entertaining dialogue, by which the affecting tale was developed: but, as I have no talent for repeating the eloquent converſations of vulgar people, I ſhall leave it to the reader's imagination.

Miſs Pickman burſt into a flood of tears, and called down a thouſand curſes on the faithleſs and perjured libertine. For half an hour ſhe refuſed all conſolation; neither the cold water nor the hartſhorn could allay her hyſteric convulſions; nor could the ſoothing expreſſions of the aſſiduous *Maddiſon* *

* The name of her own maid.

ſoften

ſoften the diſtraction of her thoughts. It did ſo happen, however, that one of the volumes of "Clariſſa Harlowe" lay on the table; and ſhe was ſo lucky as to open upon a part, where the pleaſing powers of a profligate, in the character of Lovelace, are made the moſt attractive. In this hero ſhe ſoon diſcovered the archetype of her lover; and, pitying his irregularities, adored him, with all his wickedneſs. Maddiſon put her in mind, that "rakes make the beſt huſ-"bands;" and ſhe only longed for an opportunity to ſhew at once her forgiveneſs and affection.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that the ſtory loſt any time in travelling to Orleton. For three days it afforded Mrs. Bracey

ſo much pleaſure and employment, that it had actually recovered her from a moſt ſevere fit of ill-humour, by which the whole houſe had not only been tormented, but put into an uproar. The firſt perſon to whom ſhe told it was Miſs St. Leger, into whoſe room ſhe came, breathleſs with eagerneſs, to diſcloſe it, with a thouſand exaggerations. She then found ſome occaſion to relate it to every female ſervant in the houſe ſeparately, a little varied or embelliſhed at each relation; and, before the male attendants, it was the conſtant theme of her converſation, both at dinner and at ſupper.

Let not this ſurprize the reader, who recollects her partiality for Fitz-Albini. The kind of partiality ſhe entertained for

for him was not leſſened by this tale. Perhaps it was increaſed. Nor was it improbable, that the next opportunity his attentions would be ſtill more the object of her purſuit than before. For, totally without a heart, and totally without thoſe principles which the underſtanding ſometimes furniſhes as a ſubſtitute for its directing influence; of the man for whom ſhe indulged a preference, ſhe could think the worſt, without diminiſhing her admiration, and ſpeak the worſt, without diminiſhing her purſuit.

On Jane St. Leger the effect was widely different. Her grief was great; her anger was yet greater than her grief. But ſhe exerted all her fortitude to con-

ceal her emotions, at leaſt till Mrs. Bracey left the room: and, as that lady was not eminent for her knowledge of the genuine and natural workings of the human heart, violent as were thoſe of Jane St. Leger on the preſent occaſion, they paſſed unnoticed by her.

To Jane it cauſed an indeſcribable gloom and depreſſion. A cloud ſeemed at once to ſpread over every object in the landſcape of life. The ſun appeared to be blotted out of the ſkies; the brilliant colours of the proſpect to fade; and every thing to wear a dull, blank, unintereſting hue. The world ſeemed peopled with dæmons; and that which wore the faireſt ſhape was the moſt miſchievous. She lamented her exiſtence; and

and rued the day that ſhe was born. "My beloved mother! my tender, yet "imprudent father!" ſhe exclaimed to herſelf, "look down, if it be permit-"ted, from your abodes above, and pi-"ty, comfort, and direct, your unhappy "daughter! See her alone, and help-"leſs, ſtruggling amidſt vice and folly; "inſulted by thoſe who ought to protect "her; and beſet by Profligacy, under "the attractive ſhapes of Virtue and "Genius! All before her is Darkneſs "and Deſpair! Dependence without "hope! Vice left to range unencoun-"tered! Religion itſelf ſeems too "weak to penetrate the gloom before "her! O fortify her heart! illumine "her mind!" A tremor came over her; her eyes grew dim; ſhe ſunk in-

ſenſible upon the bed. When ſhe recovered, the impreſſion of a viſion remained ſo ſtrong upon her, that ſhe found it very difficult to doubt its reality. She thought, while ſhe was lamenting her fate, there appeared to her the figure of a beautiful female, all pale and diſheveled, who reproached her for her tears, and cried, "Why weep you? you are "innocent; you are ſpotleſs! So was I "once! See me now in torments; "while thou ſhalt bathe in bliſs! "Now," at which the figure was inſtantly transformed into an emaciated corpſe, "now my ſufferings return, "and will for ever be repeated, till the "wretch, the cauſe of all my ſufferings, "whom yet I love, ſhall waſh out his "ſin, and clear that mind, which was

"once

" once the reſidence of purity, from the " blot of ſenſual pleaſures! Oh, my " tortures increaſe! Warn him, thou " yet untainted Being, warn him! I " already ſee him tottering within the " graſp of the watchful fiend of Hell! " They ſeize ———." She ſcreamed—the horrors of the voice were in her ear; and ſhe waked with the convulſion of her terrors. She knew not where ſhe was; her ideas were wild; her whole frame was exhauſted; but her thoughts ſoon fixed upon Fitz-Albini.

She reflected deeply upon his character; ſhe began now to feel pity, mixed with her indignation; and her mind became occupied in deviſing means of admonition, which the delicacy of her ſitua-

tion, and a thouſand complicated feelings, ſentiments, and principles, continually thwarted.

In the mean time, the ſubject every day got ſtronger hold of her thoughts. Her countenance, her voice, her pale cheeks, betrayed it. Again the whole ſcenery of life became arrayed in new hues. A tender penſive pleaſing kind of melancholy tinted the charms of nature. Paſt events of her life, which had gone by little noticed at the time, ſtarted up in her mind in new and lively colours. Her habits of thinking, and rules of appreciating the circumſtances of the world, became totally altered. Chearfulneſs not only deſerted herſelf, but was unpleaſing to her in others. She always loved

loved ſolitude; but it now had a new character, and new charms for her; the light in which ſhe before would have arrayed it was gay; its ſhades could not now be too deep, or too gloomy.

The ſeaſon of the year was congenial to the ſtate of her mind. Autumn has always been conſidered as propitious to Melancholy.

"——— In every breeze the power
"Of philoſophic Melancholy comes *."

Nor is it ſuited to philoſophic melancholy alone. It is peculiarly grateful to that melancholy which ariſes from a ſoftened and agitated heart. Dim-faded

* Thomſon's Autumn.

woods, gentle ſuns, or dark fogs, and a general appearance of decay in the face of Nature, coincided with the frame of mind, and the feelings, of Miſs St. Leger. She wandered out by herſelf for hours together. She climbed the neighbouring hills; and beheld with inexpreſſible delight the mixture of land and ſea around her, which forms the moſt pictureſque and beautiful of all proſpects. The green undulating hills fed by ſheep, or covered with duſky wood; the brown ſtubbles in the valleys; the bold projecting cliff, crowned by ſome rude antique caſtle; and the blue ſea ſpreading its broad expanſe, dotted with ſails, in the opening of the bay; while ſome quiet village, with its humble church, ſcattered upon the hills, or among the valleys,

leys, varied the calm and ſolitary features of the view, and ſoothed her heart and her imagination. She often ſtood, like a ſtatue on the heights, gazing around her, while the temperate air braced her frame, and refreſhed her ſpirits. She ſaw far around; and, beneath her, the labourer and woodman at work in the fields, and the copſes; and watched the progreſs of the plough along the ſlopes, or in the bottoms, where the dark up-turned ſoil gave a new tint to the landſcape. Such were her rambles on thoſe glorious days of mild ſun-ſhine at this beautiful period of the year; which Thomſon ſo incomparably deſcribes, when

The leng hen'd night elaps'd, the Morning
" ſhines
" Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,

" Unfolding fair the laſt Autumnal day.
" And now the melting Sun diſpels the fog,
" The rigid hoar-froſt melts before his beam;
" And, hung on every ſpray, on every blade
" Of graſs, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round*."

But it was not in theſe bright days alone that ſhe loved this ſcenery. When the Heavens ſcowled, and a moiſt chilly air portended rain, ſhe ſallied forth to her accuſtomed haunts; and was charmed to obſerve the drizzling ſhower come on, and the ſcarce-penetrable fog fill the valley, gather round the hills, and almoſt obſcure the caſtle, while here and there an object broke through the miſt; till preſently the Sun again peeped dimly through the hazineſs, and created a picture of indeſcribable beauty.

* Autumn, v. 1163—1169.

I may

I may well ſay, *indeſcribable*; for, where are the talents that can deſcribe the charms of Nature with ſufficient force?

" O for the fire and voice of Seraphim,
" To ſing her glories with devotion due*!"

Ye who live in cities, and are pleaſed with no views but of the dull works of man, what aliens are ye to genuine delight! How little conception can ye have of the varied grandeur of that Creation amid which ye are placed! Ye may practiſe ſome dull groveling virtues; but ſurely your hearts can never have expanded with thoſe overflowings of gratitude and admiration, which elevate us

* Beattie's Minſtrel, I. ſt. XL.

to

to the dignity of which our nature is capable!

Yet not they alone, who are immured in cities, are thus inſenſible to the ſcenery of Nature. There are beings ſo brutal, as to paſs their days in the midſt of it, yet to be untouched by its beauties. With what ſcorn, diſguſt, and horror, was Miſs St. Leger obliged to chill and repreſs all the pure and heavenly ſentiments and images with which her whole frame was thrilling from her walk, when on her return ſhe met Mrs. Bracey. On this woman the ſtriking features of Nature made not even a faint, a momentary impreſſion. She lived amidſt fields, without even having enriched her mind with the acquiſition of a ſingle rural image.

image. Something very groſs, or very abſurd, in the courſe of artificial ſociety, was alone capable of giving even a feeble impulſe to her ſlender faculties. Whence ſhe ſprang I know not: but this I know, that ſhe was bred in the hot-bed of Vice, in the hurry and impurity of an overgrown metropolis, amidſt the corrupting luxury of riches, ill and ſuddenly got; and among connections whoſe ſentiments were all wrong, whoſe heads were all turned, and manners were a diſguſting mixture of vulgarity and affected poliſh, from the ſuddenneſs of their unexpected elevation above the order they had all ſo lately held in ſociety. That Mr. Bracey ſhould have ſelected this lady for his wife, though ſhe might have ſeen more company, and been inſtructed in

more

more of what are called accompliſh-ments, than the daughters of his neigh-bours the country-gentlemen, may be, too late, a cauſe of repentance to him. He has probably diſcovered, before this time, that what he and too many others deemed the prejudices of narrow minds were founded in the deepeſt experience, and deepeſt inſight into the characters and conſtitution of human nature; that the confuſion of ranks and conditions in matrimony is almoſt always productive of miſery; and that all the habits of thinking, courſes of life, and, I might almoſt ſay, even contexture of body, of thoſe who had lived hereditarily in the country, upon the ſimple produce of a landed eſtate, are ſo diametrically oppo-ſite to thoſe of ſuch as have been pam-

pered

pered in great towns with the abundance of wealth haſtily acquired, that they never can combine into mutual harmony; that their friends and acquaintance never meet each other but to part with equal diſguſt and abhorrence; and that, if the man, from too yielding a nature, attempts to accommodate, and to graft on the plainneſs of his character, a behaviour, mode of life, and train of thinking, ſo uncongenial, he makes himſelf abſurd, without obtaining his point; he ſpends his eſtate, while he becomes the ſcorn at once of thoſe whom he has deſerted, and thoſe whom he has joined. How far Mr. Bracey has felt theſe effects, I muſt leave others to judge. That the reſtleſs temper of his wife cannot have ſuffered her very tamely to ſubmit has, I think,

I think, been too apparent. That the manners of the houſe at Orleton were now totally different from thoſe of a family, which had been remarkable as far back as the memory of man, for their ſimplicity, decency, integrity, and plainneſs, could not but be notorious to all the neighbours.

Mrs. Bracey received Miſs St. Leger from her morning walks ſometimes with fretfulneſs, ſometimes with anger, and ſometimes with ridicule. While ſhe was ſtretched at length on a ſofa, with ſcarcely ſtrength enough to lift up her head to addreſs her, ſhe cried, in a feeble voice, "What, returned ſafe—not dying with "fatigue!—why, you have the ſtrength "of a ploughman!—Where were you "born?

" born? I, who have been *delicately*
" bred, ſhould abſolutely have died with
" wearineſs, before I had reached half
" the way home from the very ſhorteſt of
" your walks! But then, to be ſure,
" there is a difference. We, who have
" had the advantage of large fortunes,
" have been ſo indulged!—O how could
" I, with all my accompliſhments, and
" advantages, and acquaintance, throw
" myſelf away upon a brute of a coun-
" try ſquire; to be entertained all the
" evening with nothing but the atchieve-
" ments of his beaſtly hounds, and ſee
" nothing all the morning but odious
" cows and ſheep!—And now, madam,
" let me hear, for I am dying with en-
" nui, what entertainment you can afford
" me, after this mighty walk of yours.

" What

" What have you ſeen, or heard? Have
" you ſeen any beaux? Have you heard
" any news of the neighbourhood?
" Have thoſe diſagreeable Pickmans
" committed any freſh abſurdity? Has
" Mrs. O'Callaghan made herſelf more
" ridiculous to the gentlemen, by telling
" any new tale of indecency? Or has
" Lady B***, in her eagerneſs to draw
" out the petty ſcandal of the neigh-
" bourhood, given additional traits at
" once of her delight of defamation,
" and her illiterate ignorance and folly?
" Has Mr. Shipley's curioſity been pu-
" niſhed by any new flight of quails
" from the cloſet he was requeſted not
" to open? Or has Mr. Squeaker again
" ordered the tails of his neighbours
" hounds to be docked off, which by

" paſſing

" paſſing through his garden in the chace,
" did him a farthing's worth of damage?
" Oh! tell me inſtantly! invent, if you
" do not know; for, I am only kept
" alive in this deteſtable ſolitude by
" ſcandal!"

" Dear Mrs. Bracey," replied Miſs St. Leger, " what news, what ſcandal, can
" I have learned in the ſolitary fields?
" What beaux can I have ſeen? You
" know I find the air refreſhing to my
" health; and that it is a ſufficient re-
" compenſe, without hearing news, or
" meeting beaux."—" Well, for my
" part," anſwered the lady, " you wo-
" men, who are bred in the country,
" ſeem to be ſo unconquerably ſtupid,
" as to be content to vegetate with the
" plants,

" plants, among which ye live. We " people of better birth, who have been " educated in the world, require a little " food for the mind. But, this execra- " ble place———." At that inſtant the door opened, and Mr. B***, whoſe character has already been deſcribed in page 37 of theſe memoirs, entered the room. The lady inſtantly revived from her ſofa; and was all gaiety and ſpirits.

Mr. B***, a man not much inclined to gallantry, at leaſt with the upper orders of the ſex, received the advances of Mrs. Bracey with a repulſive kind of aukwardneſs, by which, however, ſhe was not diſcouraged. She talked on, till B*** began to be flattered with the notice, a notice to which he was not much

much accuſtomed from ladies, and invited her to ſee the wonders of his work-ſhop, where his genius ſhone out in the operations of his hands, and where he had found out a method of making a waggon in a ſuperior ſtyle to the carpenter, which would move without horſes into the bargain. There was a whim in all this not at all ill-ſuited to the turn, temper, and views, of Mrs. Bracey. She accepted the invitation with pleaſure; and, in return, gratified him with an exaggerated relation of all the vile, improper, falſe, defamatory, and abſurd ſtories of every one, high and low, which were circulating through the neighbourhood. B***, while he did not want a kind of ſhrewdneſs, which impelled him to deſpiſe the folly and indelicacy of

the

the relator, yet poſſeſſed a malevolence of heart which made him pleaſed with the relation. But, of all that was repeated, the ſtory of poor Fitz-Albini ſeemed to fill him with a diabolical delight, of which he could not ſuppreſs the appearance; and his delight was the more keen, becauſe the mortifying tale paſſed before Miſs St. Leger, whoſe beauty *even he* could not but admire; and whom, therefore, as he ſuſpected her partiality for Fitz-Albini, he enjoyed a triumph in thus puniſhing.

A ſly ſidelong kind of look, which at all times in a certain degree characterized his countenance, was now directed at Miſs St. Leger; while Mrs. Bracey continued her exaggerated ſcandal,

dal, which was heightened by his ſarcaſms, and his pretended pity of poor injured Miſs Pickman. "But," added he, "perhaps I ought not to ſay ſo: "to be ſure, it is no buſineſs of mine: "and I think Fitz-Albini a very good "ſort of a fellow, I am ſure: but the "world you know Mrs. Bracey, the "world you know, will have but little "compaſſion for theſe fellows, who are "ſet up for geniuſes—very pretty, to "be ſure, very pretty, to write verſes on "robin-redbreaſts, and ſo; and I like "them very much myſelf: I like them "very much:" ſhaking his head (of "which he had a trick when he was ea-"ger): "but then the world ſays, theſe "poets, theſe tender-hearted gentlemen "*(I mean no reflections, I am ſure)*, are

" apt to want a little common ſenſe, or
" ſo, and to get into a few ſcrapes, but
" then, I dare ſay, they mean no harm—
" I don't doubt they feel a great deal—
" ready to break their hearts at the death
" of a robin-redbreaſt; yes—there were
" ſome verſes the other day in the news-
" paper upon Mrs. P****'s pug-dog
" breaking his leg; very ſoft, and very
" pretty, to be ſure: I dare ſay they
" were his: poor fellow—I am ſure he
" feels very much; for, notwithſtanding
" the ſlip he has made, I think him a
" very good fellow, I am ſure—I like
" him very much!"

Such was the elegant harangue of Mr. B***, of which thoſe, to whom the mean and ſhuffling, yet malignant, tones,

tones of his voice, and his cunning oblique looks cannot be conveyed, will loſe almoſt all the force; yet ſuch is the common opinion, which vulgar minds have formed of poetry—*rhymes upon the deaths of robin-redbreaſts, and the broken limbs of pug-dogs.* A relation of the writer of theſe memoirs, one who had been brought up at a public ſchool and univerſity, one who was himſelf allied to poets, and whoſe very name ought to have excited in him ſome love for literature, having ſeen in a news-paper ſome of the moſt execrable namby-pamby lines on a robin which ever diſgraced the pages of thoſe diurnal publications, came up to him at a moment he meant to flatter, and told him of the diſcovery he had made; how much he admired the

lines, of which he inſtantly recognized the manner, ſo tender, ſo pretty, that they could have been written by nobody but the perſon to whom he was addreſſing his remarks. This man really ſuppoſed he was paying a compliment; and ſuch were his ideas of the higheſt of all arts, that he wondered why the perſon he was attempting to compliment ſeemed ſhocked, and turned from him with diſguſt. Mr. B***'s ſentiments of poetry were at leaſt as ignorant, and low. He thought perhaps, like a famous mathematician at Cambridge, who, upon Virgil being put into his hands, and his opinion of that divine bard being aſked, replied, "he might "be very well; but, for his part, *he "could find no proof in him.*"

Of

Of all the minds that could ever come into compariſon, no two could be more oppoſite than thoſe of Mr. B*** and Fitz-Albini. The one dry, minute, hard, narrow, ſelfiſh, ignorant; the other wide, wild, impetuous, full of ſentiment and ſoul; preciſe and laborious when the occaſion required; but otherwiſe general, comprehenſive, flowing with imagery, and excurſive: B*** loved nobody; but Fitz-Albini was his averſion.

Mrs. Bracey had a mode of expreſſing her pleaſure at the triumph of malignity, which was peculiarly provoking;—a ſort of ſtruggling noiſe, between an hyſteric laugh and an exclamation. Miſs St. Leger, who to a gentle diſpoſition added

a lofty ſpirit, felt her whole ſoul agitated by this abominable converſation. But ſhe reſolutely commanded her perturbation from betraying itſelf in her countenance.

B*** left the houſe without having the ſatisfaction of knowing the depth of the wounds he had inflicted; and Miſs St. Leger retired, overwhelmed with mortification, to her room. There ſhe gave a full vent to the bitterneſs of her thoughts. She knew too well the diſpoſitions of thoſe whom ſhe had left, to give full credit to their tales; but, though ſhe deſpiſed the relators, for Fitz-Albini ſhe could find no apology, which ſet her heart at eaſe.

The

The viſion or dream which had made ſuch an impreſſion upon her recurred with double force to her mind; and ſhe felt a perplexity of conſcience from which ſhe knew not how to extricate herſelf.

CHAPTER X.

DURING this time, Fitz-Albini little ſuſpected how much he had been the ſubject of the converſation of the neighbourhood. He had ſpent his days in ſolitary wanderings, and his nights in feveriſh grief. His father's maladies increaſed; his mother's fortitude forſook her. Yet, even amidſt her ſorrows, ſome officious perſon had carried the wicked tale to her ears, which, however, ſhe rejected with the ſcorn that became her, and turned her indignation on the tale-bearer.

Yet

Yet as he occaſionally traverſed the country, with a mind torn by the conflict of a thouſand paſſions, he ſaw ſomething of neglect, or ſcorn, in the countenances of thoſe acquaintance whom he accidentally met, which at laſt excited his wonder. Not conſcious of having done any thing to deſerve it, he ſought in vain within himſelf for its explanation. To many ſorts of affront, which ariſe from fear, or envy, or hatred, he had been habituated. But there was an implied ſuperiority in thoſe, who at preſent inſulted him, which had a totally different effect. His ſpirit, or perhaps his pride, could ill brook it, even amidſt the oppreſſion of much ſeverer misfortunes. The momentary impulſe of his impetuous ſpirit induced him to call for ſa-

tisfaction from thoſe whoſe behaviour appeared ſo unaccountable to him. But his cooler judgement told him, that to take ſuch notice was to confer on the inflictors of his mortification more conſequence than they deſerved.

Of all whom he met, the countenance and manner of his old friend Mr. Ch***y gave him the moſt acute and unexpected pain. That he ſhould have fallen into the concerted ſchemes, whatever they were, for concerted ſchemes they muſt have been, ſince otherwiſe ſo many would not have agreed in the ſame conduct, excited his ſurprize, as well as ſorrow. Many times did he reſolve to call upon him for an explanation; many times did he reſolve to requite the wrong by

by the revenge which the rules of honour have dictated; but his cooler judgement diſapproved of all his reſolutions. If his anger was ill-founded, he would have cauſe indeed to repent the raſhneſs and violence of ſuch ſteps: if it had too real a cauſe, the man who could be ſo mean as to prove wantonly, and without an urgent cauſe, unfaithful, was by far too deſpicable for his vengeance.

Not ſo Mr. B***: the few words of outward friendſhip he profeſſed had never been believed. But this man, though there was ſomething of the common coldneſs in his behaviour, yet endeavoured, by fits, to conceal it under the ſemblance of civility. Fitz-Albini, who knew his character, knew that *he* would rather

diſcover any thing at which he was offended behind his back than to his face. He, therefore would have been a more proper object of reſentment. But Fitz-Albini, humble when not ill treated, and now depreſſed with grief, was yet, when rouzed, ſo properly ſenſible of his own higher powers, and the dignity of his character, that his maturer ſentiments induced him to return the wrongs of Mr. B*** too with ſilent contempt, rather than dignify him by his notice.

Unhappy at home, affronted abroad, what had Fitz-Albini now to ſoothe him? How could he keep in good humour with himſelf? or what were the proſpects that could flatter him, when it was too probable that it would ſoon be known

known to the world, that poverty was added to whatever other cauſes there might be of ſcorn, and inſult? Under ſubjects of mortification ſo complicated, what vigour of ſoul could ſupport him!

The elaſticity of a mind, ſtrong by nature, and richly ſtored, is greater than weak people can imagine. The greatneſs of his oppreſſion called forth new powers: his ſpirit roſe; and a feeling, ſomething like deſpair, rouzed freſh animation and activity.

He ſallied forth, in a temper gayer than uſual, in queſt of adventures; to defy malice, and triumph over neglect. A perſon, powerful and commanding, when animated; a chearful voice; a bold look;

look; gave him a ſuperiority, before which his enemies, though prepared to abaſh him, ſhrank. As his horſe was flying under him acroſs the neighbouring downs, the ſight of a large party before him did not at all divert his courſe. He was ſoon recognized as he advanced; and two or three of his moſt bitter enemies of both ſexes, who were among the groupe, prepared themſelves to enjoy the pleaſure of his humiliation. The whole of them had iſſued on a morning ramble from Orleton; and Mrs. Bracey, forgetful of all her ſcandal, was the firſt to hail him, with pleaſure. Miſs St. Leger ſhrank back, alarmed, trembling, half-angry, half-delighted, yet fearful of betraying her feelings, and wiſhing herſelf any where but where ſhe was.

Sir

Sir Thomas Bulmer, Mr. Yapton, and Mr. Baugham, Miſs Halton, Miſs Fleetwood, and Mrs. Dormer, had already compoſed their countenances to various expreſſions, becoming their characters, when, as he approached, the livelineſs of his manner, and the boldneſs of his addreſs, diſarmed them all. In a chearful voice he talked with an unuſual fluency and energy, till the men who hated him ſank into an involuntary ſilence, and the women liſtened with an admiration which they could not ſuppreſs.

Miſs St. Leger alone lingered behind in a conflict of paſſions which her delicate frame was ill able to ſupport. She ſometimes heard him talk with emotions of delight and tenderneſs; at other moments

ments ſhe contemplated him with horror; and there were intervals when pity alone predominated in her boſom, and ſhe wiſhed for nothing but the power to ſave from habitual vice an amiable young man, whom accident alone, ſhe was willing to hope, had ſeduced into one great crime.

Mrs. Bracey was determined not to loſe too quickly the pleaſure of his company, while he was in ſo agreeable a humour, and abſolutely compelled him therefore to dine at Orleton. She had no ſooner reached the houſe than ſhe diſpatched a meſſenger to invite the Pickman family to dinner, that ſhe might "*enjoy the fun of the girl's diſtreſs and* "*her airs,*" as ſhe expreſſed it. The Pickman

Pickman family, diſcovering whom they were to meet, were mean enough to come at ſo abrupt an invitation.

Miſs Pickman entered, decorated with all the advantages that art and expence could give to her perſon. The ſoft temper, the kindly affections of Miſs St. Leger, could not counteract an emotion of violent hatred, as ſhe ſailed up the room in all her diamonds and coſtly ornaments; and as, while ſhe watched her with ſolicitude, ſhe ſaw her turn her enquiring eyes on Fitz-Albini, a cold depreſſing tremor ran ſuddenly over all her frame, and centered in her heart, till, as the palpitation increaſed, ſhe with difficulty kept her ſeat, or her ſenſes.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bracey, who hated Miſs Pickman more for the finery in which ſhe was arrayed, than for any power which ſhe believed in her charms, called in vain upon the exertions of Miſs St. Leger. She ſat pale, ſilent, ſtupid, loſt. But the ſummons to dinner put an end to the extent of theſe embarraſſments; and Mrs. Bracey, as uſual, ſo contrived as to place Fitz-Albini between Miſs St. Leger and herſelf. Fitz-Albini never before appeared to ſuch advantage. The fire of his eyes, the energy of his language, the acuteneſs of his obſervations, overpowered malice and prejudice, and extorted involuntary admiration. Miſs Pickman liſtened and languiſhed; and while ſhe noticed the tribute of all ears to him, whom ſhe conſidered as her

deſtined

deſtined huſband, ſhe felt it to be a gratification of her own vanity, though ſhe could little comprehend the force of his converſation.

Sir James Pickman, while he paid attention to him, was employed in calculating the advantages to which ſuch talents might be turned in public life, and the good bargains that might be made with the miniſter for himſelf as well as his future ſon-in-law. At leaſt *an Iriſh coronet* ſeemed already to be within his graſp; and freſh lucrative contracts, to double the ſuperfluous wealth in which he was wallowing. A few ſentiments, of no very pliant nature, did indeed eſcape from Fitz-Albini, not totally unmarked by him; and now and then

then an expreſſion of indignant ſcorn at the inſolence, and, too often, the diſhoneſty, of new-got riches; but habituated never to let his paſſions predominate over his intereſt, a ſwallow or two ſoon bore down any riſing emotion of Sir James, and, recalling to his mind the many emoluments that now ſeemed to open upon him from the intended match, he forced into his countenance a ſmile of peculiar complacence, and appeared uncommonly delighted with a man whom his heart, if it ever felt any ſimple paſſion, told him to abhor.

A wide and varied converſation was carried on, regarding the circumſtances of the country, and the principles of the times, in which, I know not by what

felicity,

felicity, Fitz-Albini, taking the lead, fell eaſily into a long train of opinions happily expreſſed, without appearing to declaim, or to be tedious. The impatience which fox-hunters, Eaſt-Indians, young officers, and country clergymen, generally diſcover to the diſcuſſion of any important ſubject, did, by ſome lucky power in his manner or his ſenſe, not once to-day exhibit itſelf. He lamented boldly the cowardly compromiſing ſpirit with which the higher orders degrade the ſituation in which they have been placed (not, it is true, by their own merits, but) by the wiſe inſtitutions of regulated ſociety. He deſpiſed the fallacious, half-witted arguments, to which many of the apparently well-informed of the ariſtocratic branches

of

of the ſtate, by giving too much way, ought to have admitted, as a legitimate conſequence, that they held their privileges, through the abuſe of human rights. He ſpoke with juſt anger of the dilemmas in which they were perpetually involving themſelves, by a fearful, mean, time-ſerving, mode of thinking. He laughed at the triumphs with which occaſional abuſes were held up as incontrovertible proofs of an erroneous ſyſtem. He could ridicule, or hate, or ſcorn the man, and yet pay a due deference to the order. A coronet, nay a crown, never dazzled his underſtanding; though he conceived it added an additional grace to merit.

He

He treated with indignation, as ſtrong as language could paint, that inſolent and preſumptuous folly which affected to throw by, as an uſeleſs incumbrance of prejudice and ignorance, the gradual and accumulated wiſdom of every age, from the commencement of the world, and to build a new ſyſtem upon a ſet of new-diſcovered principles, totally original, and from the pure fountain of a philoſophic mind. His contempt was too big for utterance, at the wretched, and baſe blindneſs of theſe people, when he obſerved, that they could ſo little have invented even the paltry ſyſtems of which they boaſt, without the aid of that wiſdom and learning on which they would trample, that a child of ten years old, who has been accuſtomed to the ſociety

and

and converſation of well-educated and well-informed minds, will often diſcover more rectitude, more vigour, more comprehenſion of knowledge, than the greateſt abilities could arrive at, by the mere force of their own diſcoveries in rude and unpoliſhed nations. The few particles that any one mind can add to the heap of wiſdom are ſmall indeed. We build ſtep by ſtep upon the works of our predeceſſors. And how many *data* were already ſettled, before even the mighty Newton began his wonderful progreſs in ſcience!

"Admit for a moment," ſaid he, "the "ſeduction of theſe wild principles to "influence your mind, you will, upon "taking up all the compoſitions of for-

"mer

" mer genius, all the lives of the great
" men of former days, loſe at once all
" the charms and admiration which
" you formerly felt in them; all the
" rules of their conduct, all the guides
" of their ſentiments, all the motives of
" their paſſions, appear ſo childiſh and
" ignorant, that they ſink into drivellers.
" The acute wiſdom of Burleigh, the
" comprehenſion, the ſpirit, the bril-
" liance of Ralegh, fade away, and be-
" come a pitiable weakneſs. The rich
" eloquence of Cicero becomes a flowery
" inanity. And the tales of Homer, and
" of Virgil, and the enchanting charac-
" ters of Shakſpeare, command ſo little
" of our reſpect, that they loſe all in-
" tereſt in the heart, or the imagina-
" tion."

He obſerved, that it was always a matter of inexplicable aſtoniſhment to him, how ſo fooliſh a ſyſtem had ever made ſuch progreſs as it had. The idea of a ſyſtem of government, which was to derive its ſtrength and reſpect from the powers of ratiocination of the governed, is adapted to an order of beings, which can bear little ſimilitude to ſuch as the great Creator has placed here. We are a compound of reaſon and paſſion; and perhaps the heart is a leſs erroneous director of our ſentiments and our conduct, than the underſtanding. If it was not ſo, it appears as if many parts of the *inſpired writings*, and many delineations of character to be found there, would give a weight and colour to a thouſand little circumſtances which would

would be unworthy of a rational creature. So at leaſt, he ſaid, it ſeemed to him; but he ſpoke with awe and deference of a ſubject of which he could not preſume to have any confident opinion.

He lamented the too frequent defect of diſcrimination in minds, which, by an endeavour to emancipate themſelves from an unmanly ſubjection to the dazzle of rank and wealth, are perpetually carried to the contrary extreme, and by the very inſolence they diſcover betray the ſuperiority they ſtrive to conceal. Of all characters, he ſaid, there was a period when he moſt deteſted the ſervile follower of titles, the voluntary appendant to rank and honours. He

yet held ſuch an one in ſtrong diſlike. But the times had unfortunately brought forth more dangerous monſters of a contrary nature, which, of courſe, excited his more violent abhorrence; though the two extremes ſo nearly met that he had often obſerved the ſame perſons paſs from one to the other.

Mr. Baugham, the Eaſt-Indian, now obſerved, that a perſon who had been formerly an admirer and defender of the "privileged orders" might at preſent, without a juſt reproach of inconſiſtency, be an enemy to them; for the extreme profuſion with which ſuch privileges had lately been conferred, without any tolerable ſelection, had brought them into very juſt diſrepute. *He knew,* "that

"ſome

" ſome very poor people, whoſe whole
" income would ſcarce pay the expences
" of his *ſecond table*, had arrived even at
" a peerage, when men of *wealth* and
" *conſideration*" (mark the combination of words) " were ſcarce noticed."—" I am
" no more," he went on, " an advocate
" for the French ſyſtem, Mr. Fitz-Al-
" bini, than you are: far—very far
" from it.—But then a miniſter muſt
" not quite fancy himſelf in the days of
" the Plantagenets: a few old-faſhioned
" notions muſt a little give way, and
" bend to the times. I am not unac-
" quainted with our hiſtory any more
" than yourſelf; though perhaps you
" imagine I am. The Tudors, at their
" acceſſion, very wiſely broke the chain
" of the old feudal power of the ariſto-

"cratic order. We now live, Mr. "Fitz-Albini, in a commercial coun-"try and age. Who ſo enlarged, who "ſo well-informed, who ſo noble, as "the Britiſh merchant? Whether we "trade to the Weſt; or to the Eaſt; "whether we direct our counting-houſe "in London; or command factories "abroad; are we not as well employed "as my good friend Sir Thomas Bul-"mer here (he will excuſe me), in ri-"ding after his hounds all the morning, "and drinking his bottle of port, and "falling aſleep after it, during the re-"mainder of the day?" This produced a loud laugh from the company: he went on: "Don't you think we deſerve "a few of theſe privileges as much as "they? Can't we be as uſeful to the "miniſter?

"miniſter? Don't we know as much "about the law, and about the taxes, "and *all they-there things?*" Such was the *elegant* cloſe of Mr. Baugham's obſervations, which, though he did not want acuteneſs, were ſpoken with ſuch a provincial, barbarous, half-Scotch accent, as to excite ſome wonder, where he could have been born, or received his early education. It is ſingular, that ſcarce ever any learning, any riches, any ſociety in future life, eradicate the traces of the firſt ten years ſpent amongſt mean and vulgar people.

"Perhaps, Mr. Baugham," replied Fitz-Albini, "the miniſter has been too "profuſe of his honours. But there "are ſome of your remarks which,

" though I differ from you, it will be
" difficult for me to anſwer, becauſe
" you have, a little unpolitely, made
" the ſubject approach to what may be
" interpreted as perſonal. This is, as
" you ſay, a commercial country; poſ-
" ſibly too commercial. Its commerce
" is now become neceſſary, becauſe
" without it I fear we never could pay
" the intereſt of the national debt. But
" might not that debt have been avoid-
" ed if we had not proceeded upon ſo
" commercial a ſyſtem? In our inſular
" ſituation, would the balance of power
" have been in that caſe of ſo much
" conſequence to us? From exceſſive
" wealth perhaps a country is not in leſs
" danger than from exceſſive poverty.
" It corrupts, it inflames: it in too
" many

" many reſpects aggravates the condi-
" tion of the lower orders, of whom, in
" every poſſible government, the majo-
" rity muſt conſiſt. I fear it always
" bears about it the ſeeds of its own
" diſſolution. The wealthy will, as you
" ſay, never bear to be beneath the
" higheſt conſideration; and virtue,
" wiſdom, birth; the antient gentry of
" moderate fortunes; and the humble
" and honeſt peaſantry, who have paid
" them an hereditary reſpect, will never
" endure to ſee perſons inſulting over
" them, who are remembered to have
" been lately in a ſtate of ſervility to
" the one order; and of equality to the
" other. All the philoſophical founda-
" tions of thoſe diſtinctions, which,
" when conferred on birth are ſo far

" from being generally invidious, that
" they have the moſt certain tendency
" to the peace and good order of ſoci-
" ety, are abandoned, when titles and
" privileges are beſtowed on newly-ac-
" quired riches. I know the danger of
" not gratifying this powerful ſet of
" people, who can reſort to their coffers
" laden with the ſpoils of the Eaſt, or
" perhaps keeping the key of the Na-
" tional Bank. I know with what an
" hearty contempt they treat the imbe-
" cillity of empty deſcent, or the fanci-
" ful and ſhadowy importance of a well-
" cultivated and brilliant mind. They
" hold up their rattling purſes, and,
" looking to the neighbouring boroughs,
" bid defiance to the families, to whom
" thoſe boroughs have for centuries paid
" reſpect,

" reſpect, and by whom they have for
" centuries been fed. They come into
" counties; ſpread their tables wide
" with coſtly viands, and ſurround
" them with gaudy liveries, and, ſending
" out their cards of invitation, laugh to
" ſee the plainer hoſpitality of their
" neighbours deſerted, even where elo-
" quence, and knowledge, and virtue,
" and illuſtrious birth, preſide. Riches
" now carry ſo much weight, that no-
" thing of a leſs ſubſtantial nature, no-
" thing which depends upon what are
" called *the prejudices of the mind*, can
" retain the ſmalleſt influence againſt
" it. In a little while who will retain
" land, of which the income is ſo ſcanty
" in proportion to the capital, when it
" gives no more power or reſpect than

" the money which it produces? when
" country-bankers in every town, riſing
" out of millers and ſhop-keepers, can
" fabricate their paper-money, and, go-
" ing to market with it in purchaſing
" votes to make themſelves legiſlators,
" take the Houſe of Commons by ſtorm,
" where, ſelling their voices for ſhares
" of lucrative loans and contracts, they
" can turn their paper currency into
" ſolid wealth, with which again they
" purchaſe honours and privileges to
" confirm the inſolent triumph of their
" ill-got ſuperiority? Does wealth re-
" quire theſe additional appendages in
" days like theſe? Is it not dangerous
" to gratify it? If it is ſo gratified
" much longer, I do not heſitate to af-
" ſert, that the death of the conſtitu-
" tion

" tion is not only as certain, but at
" leaſt as near, as thoſe of the indivi-
" duals at this moment exiſting un-
" der it."

" Inſtead of adding to the too in-
" creaſing force of this alarming evil,
" every thing ought to be done to
" counteract it. Every privilege, every
" power to command reſpect, ought to
" be given to education, pure and vir-
" tuous habits of life, abilities, intel-
" lectual accompliſhments, and names
" which command an hereditary reve-
" rence. The vulgar idea, that becauſe
" a man is ready at figures, and poſ-
" ſeſſes a turn for buſineſs, and has
" been initiated in it, he therefore will
" make the moſt wiſe and uſeful legiſla-
" tor,

" tor, ought to be ſcorned. A few
" men converſant in the lower details
" of buſineſs, in the Houſe, may be
" requiſite; but to make laws requires
" a more lofty, a more comprehenſive
" underſtanding. If it was not ſo, an
" attorney would make a better judge
" than a chancellor.—[You may ſmile:
" I know the alluſions in your mind;
" but the facts upon which you found
" them have, I believe, generally been
" miſunderſtood by the world. I have
" reaſon to think, *Lord Chancellor*
" *Hardwicke was always intended for*
" *the bar.*"]

" You ſeemed to laugh at the uſeleſs
" occupations of our neighbour here,
" Sir Thomas Bulmer, who has taken

" your

" your inſinuations good-naturedly, as
" became him. I ſcarce know any or-
" der of men more uſeful and reſpecta-
" ble than country-gentlemen living
" upon their eſtates, ſpending their
" money upon the ſpot, whence it has
" ariſen, and attending, by example,
" advice, and aſſiſtance, to an induſ-
" trious peaſantry. Is ſuch a man to
" be without thoſe innocent amuſe-
" ments, which conduce both to his
" health and his ſpirits? I am ſure he
" does much more wiſely in thus ſpend-
" ing his evenings, and his mornings,
" than by daily engagements to ſome
" neighbouring dinner, and a late re-
" turn at night, which breaks in upon
" the fineſt hours of the ſucceeding
" morning; expending more money in

" a leſs

" a leſs ſatisfactory, and certainly leſs
" wholeſome, manner. We are not all
" expected to have the ſame turns and
" propenſities. It is not neceſſary that
" every man ſhould waſte his time in
" ſtudies, for which, perhaps from in-
" clination, or numerous other cauſes,
" he is ill-adapted. A country-gentle-
" man, who ſpends much of his time
" in fox-hunting, if he attends to his
" other duties, I reſpect and admire.—
" If indeed, as ſometimes is the caſe, he
" ventures out of his ſphere, and judges
" only of other people by his own
" ſtandard; if, becauſe he neglects
" books, he deems every man a pedant
" who employs his time in reading, and
" deſpiſes thoſe who are not always wil-
" ling to bear the fatigue, or the loſs of

" as

" as many hours in the field, as him-
" ſelf; if he preſumes to think that no
" man ought to give an opinion different
" from his own, in the tranſaction of
" county affairs, whoſe rental is ſmaller
" than his; or, if he ventures to appre-
" ciate birth and reſpect ſolely accord-
" ing to his own narrow experience and
" information; he becomes indeed a
" very contemptible kind of animal,
" and deſerves the laſh of better minds.
" But ſo it is of all in every ſphere who
" go beyond their ſtation.

" Sir Thomas Bulmer will excuſe me,
" when I ſay that *I* would not be quite
" confined to paſs my days with his
" hunt of Gangham-lane club; but
" while they leave thoſe, whoſe habits

" of

" of life are not quite congenial with
" their own, to themſelves, I ſhould
" never wiſh to condemn them. As
" Mr. Baugham has been rather free in
" his ſtrictures, I muſt ſay I prefer
" them by far to the *Bengal-Club* with
" all their riches, and all their impor-
" tance. In a free country, it is, it
" ought to be, open to every one
" to obtain wealth, by his induſtry,
" his ingenuity, or his ſpirit! But
" I think the proſperous man might
" be content, without forcing his ſwol-
" len purſe into one's face, by way of
" blinding one, and then kicking up
" one's heels. A man who has choſen
" to purſue a more ſelf denying, intel-
" lectual habit of life, might ſurely be
" left

" left to his own ideas in homely fruga-
" lity without being inſulted.

" The rapid facility with which riches
" have been acquired in the laſt twenty
" years, not only in the Eaſt-Indies,
" the Weſt-Indies, and the factories,
" but at home, by contracts, loans,
" ſpeculations, fees of office, &c. &c.
" have advanced ſo very great a number
" of very mean people into exceſſive
" ſplendour, that, inſtead of yielding
" more than formerly to its predomi-
" nance, every mode of giving power
" and reſpect to the antient families
" ought to be adopted. The tide is
" flowing, and the waves are every day
" growing higher, to overwhelm us;
" but my feeble voice, till it is quite
" drowned,

" drowned, ſhall never ceaſe to cry out
" againſt it. It is not for myſelf I care:
" I can bear their malice, and their
" ſcorn, which, in the ſmall extent to
" which I am known, has never ceaſed
" to perſecute me. Without ability,
" without knowledge, they yet have
" never wanted an invention by which
" they have endeavoured to make me
" ridiculous. But I am confident that
" I have truth on my ſide; and truth
" will at laſt win its way to be heard.
" I do not mean that they are incapable
" of raiſing the laugh againſt me: I
" know too well the contrary; and it
" would be fooliſh to deny that I have
" often felt it; but the feeling has been
" momentary: my conviction has ne-
" ver altered; nor have I ever been
" diſpirited

" diſpirited from declaring my abhor-
" rence of *purſe-proud wealth.*"

Sir James Pickman by no means enjoyed this. He writhed about, and kept his temper with ſome difficulty. After half-conſidering, he thought, at two or three different periods, Fitz-Albini had given him ſome advantage. Two or three half-formed words died upon his tongue. At laſt a pauſe gave him the opportunity, and the courage. " Mr. " Fitz-Albini," ſaid he, " the active " life I have led has not given me the " ſame taſte which you have had for " abſtract ſpeculations; and for ſtudying " Homer, and Virgil, and Cicero, and " all the great writers of antiquity: you " will forgive me, if I expreſs my fear

" that you have rather heated your brain
" too much with theſe ſame authors:
" they may be very fine (I won't ſay any
" thing to their diſparagement), for
" your colleges, and your lofty authors,
" who live in garrets upon the feaſts of
" their own brains, and *ſuch-like*: but
" they won't bear upon life, Mr. Fitz-
" Albini, they won't bear upon life.
" But perhaps I might a little foil you
" at your own weapons: I have not
" quite forgot my Latin *no more* than
" you: there is an author we uſed to
" read (*Ovidius Naſo* I believe was his
" name), who ſays,"—[and then he be-
gan to collect his mouth; and in a
broad Scotch accent, and a wrong
quantity to almoſt every ſyllable, he
pronounced the following trite paſſage:]

"——— Quæ non fecimus ipſi,
"Vix ea noſtra voco.———"

"Now, Mr. Fitz-Albini, I think that "is ſheer good ſenſe; produce me a "few more ſuch paſſages, and I'll have "at your fine poets and orators myſelf. "I think rank a very good thing; and "I think a good old eſtate a very good "thing. But then I don't think it is a "bad thing for a man, by his own in-"duſtry or abilities, to make his own "fortune—eh?"

"No more do I, Sir James," replied Fitz-Albini, "if he makes it honeſtly; "and will not be ſo puffed up with his "own ſucceſs as to deſpiſe every body "elſe, and will not think himſelf ill-"uſed, if all the honours and privi-

"leges

" leges of the land are not his rewards,
" in preference to ſmaller, though
" competent, fortunes, which being in-
" herited from a long line of anceſtors,
" have given the poſſeſſors time and
" opportunity to cultivate more refined,
" more dignified, though perhaps not
" ſo ſhowy, qualities: I agree with
" Ovid, that the acts of our anceſtors
" cannot be ſubſtituted for our own de-
" ficiencies in obtaining new rewards:
" but I aſſert, that the acts of a man's
" anceſtors may place him in ſuch a ſi-
" tuation, as gives an opportunity to
" himſelf to purſue a line of conduct
" which he could not have purſued
" without ſuch birth, and which merits
" a ſpecies of honours, that the fabrica-
" tion of his own fortune can ſcarcely

" ever

"ever be entitled to. Numbers may,
"and will abuſe the advantages of birth,
"as they do every other advantage:
"But it ſhould, and often does, ope-
"rate as an incentive to new glory.

"There are modes of becoming rich,
"which the general ſenſe of mankind
"has condemned, ſuch as extortion,
"famine, the ſword, fraud, and many
"others. Of ſuch I am not now ſpeak-
"ing. But in the gradual acquiſition
"of wealth by legal, ſanctioned, means,
"I fear there is moſt frequently a diſho-
"neſt, and almoſt always a narrow, ſelf-
"iſh, ſordid, ſpirit. Mr. Baugham ſpoke
"of the liberality, ſenſe, knowledge,
"of the Britiſh merchant. I muſt
"think Mr. Baugham ſuffered himſelf

" to fall into a very trite, and unfound-
" ed, though faſhionable, ſort of cant.
" It has been my lot to know, and to
" watch, ſome of this deſcription. In
" the firſt place, where is their libera-
" lity? They put their names down
" indeed for pompous ſums to public or
" private ſubſcriptions advertiſed in
" news-papers, when country gentle-
" men, of large landed rentals, come
" forward ſlowly, or not at all. But
" recollect the nature of their circum-
" ſtances: immenſe ſums are always
" paſſing through their hands; every
" thing is comparative; a few guineas
" appear like a cipher to them, who are
" making 20, or perhaps 30, or 40, or
" even 100, *per cent.* by hazarding the
" capitals of other people: the country
" gentleman,

" gentleman, meanwhile, is waiting for
" the ſlow payment of ſcarcely two *per*
" *cent.* on his own capital, on which he
" cannot encroach, becauſe it is locked
" up in land; an income, which his
" neceſſary habits of hoſpitality, his
" ſupport of the poor, his land-tax, and
" his repairs, have already fully antici-
" cipated. But this man, who would
" thus liberally bring forth his guineas
" to the diſtreſſed, would, if ſuch diſ-
" treſs impelled a perſon to part with
" his property, of which the *advanta-*
" *geous* ſale was to determine whether
" the wretched being ſhould have any
" ſurplus for his own ſubſiſtence; this
" liberal man, I ſay, would not ſcruple
" to cheat the vendor out of a thouſand
" pounds, perhaps the only remnant he

" could have hoped to call his own.
" Call him to account: he ſmiles:—
" 'oh, there he was at his trade; it was
" *a bargain!*'—Where is his knowledge?
" In commerce? No: he has contem-
" plated but ſome one branch, of which
" the means of proſperity or decay have
" warped all his ideas. If he be a Weſt-
" India merchant, every thing is to be
" ſacrificed to its produce, and con-
" ſumptions. If we cannot retain iſlands
" enough to fill our markets here, the
" whole force and finances of the na-
" tion muſt be exhauſted to obtain
" them; and the miniſter is a fool, and
" the country loſt, if they are ſacrificed.
" If we puſh our conqueſts, ſo as to
" overſtock the markets, though our
" country ſhould be enriched, and our
" glory

" glory extended, it is nothing but op-
" probrium and ruin. If he be a corn-
" factor, are his opinions to be truſted
" regarding the agriculture of the
" country?—The very reverſe.—His
" whole thoughts, and all his manœu-
" vres, are fixed upon keeping down
" the price of the produce of our own
" country, that he may obtain the
" bounty, and the gain, of importing it
" from other kingdoms, to the ruin of
" the farmers, and the draining the na-
" tion of ſo much poſitive wealth.
" Merchants do, therefore (they always
" muſt), contemplate commerce in a
" narrow partial light, without the in-
" clination, or perhaps the capacity, of
" viewing it on the broad baſis of its
" political relations. Where do their

" great abilities appear? They are rea-
" dy, perhaps, at figures; and, by an
" active buſtling life, and an intercourſe
" with a great variety of people, there
" are a few common topics at which
" they muſt be ready, more ready, I
" admit, than the generality of country-
" gentlemen, whoſe underſtandings, if
" not by nature particularly vigorous,
" the quiet, retired life they lead has a
" tendency to render ſluggiſh and dull.
" But dull and ſluggiſh as they too of-
" ten are (and I cannot deny that I fre-
" quently have found them a little ſopo-
" rifick), when rouſed, they are at leaſt
" infinitely more generous, bold, and
" comprehenſive, than the pert, calcu-
" lating, balancing, ideas of a mercan-
" tile head.

" All

" All this will be deemed illiberal. " This bugbear name of illiberality has " frightened us till we are to confound " all diſtinctions. The conſequence is, " that we are to ſurrender our under- " ſtandings, hood-winked, to theſe peo- " ple as our maſters. Literature, ge- " nius, elevated ſentiments, liberal pro- " feſſions, are to be ſilent, and ſhrink " into inſignificance, before trade and " wealth. Wealth is now the ſole god " of our idolatry; and trade is held in " the higheſt reverence, becauſe it " brings us neareſt to that ſelfiſh, in- " ſolent, immoral, corrupt, ſenſual, " blood-ſtained, altar. Let but a fel- " low, who once wore a livery, come " back from the Eaſt with his big purſe " pouring over with gold, even though

" the ſtains of the blood through which
" he waded to it are viſible to every eye,
" and the ſhrieks of dying thouſands
" are yet ringing in every ear;—let him
" throw open his ſplendid apartments in
" Groſvenor-ſquare, or Portland-place,
" and half the titles and rank in the
" kingdom will be ſeen flocking to his
" aſſemblies.—Expreſs your wonder—
" people ſtare with contempt in your
" face, as much as to ſay, 'where have
" you lived? what fooliſh prejudices
" have you got into your head? The
" days of chivalry are over, Mr. Don
" Quixote!'

" The days of chivalry are over!
" But ſome of the ſentiments of chi-
" valry ſhall not be over with me; be-
" cauſe

" cauſe I believe them to be founded
" in virtue and conſummate wiſdom!"

Here Mr. Baugham, whoſe face had exhibited a thouſand contortions during this harangue, began, in a ridiculous mimicking tone, to repeat that ſublime paſſage of Mr. Burke, which I have ſo often heard Eaſt-Indians ſelect for their laughter: " *It is now ſixteen or ſeventeen*
" *years ſince I ſaw the Queen of France,*
" *then the dauphineſs, at Verſailles; and*
" *ſurely never lighted on this orb, which*
" *ſhe hardly ſeemed to touch, a more de-*
" *lightful viſion. I ſaw her juſt above*
" *the horizon, decorating and cheering the*
" *elevated ſphere ſhe juſt began to move*
" *in—glittering like the morning-ſtar, full*
" *of life, and ſplendour, and joy. Oh!*

" *what a revolution! and what an heart*
" *muſt I have, to contemplate without emo-*
" *tion that elevation, and that fall! Lit-*
" *tle did I dream, when ſhe added titles of*
" *veneration to thoſe of enthuſiaſtic, diſ-*
" *tant, reſpectful love, that ſhe ſhould*
" *ever be obliged to carry the ſharp anti-*
" *dote againſt diſgrace concealed in that*
" *boſom; little did I dream that I ſhould*
" *have lived to ſee ſuch diſaſters fallen*
" *upon her in a nation of gallant men, in*
" *a nation of men of honour, and of cava-*
" *liers: I thought ten thouſand ſwords*
" *muſt have leaped from their ſcabbards to*
" *avenge a look that threatened her with*
" *inſult.—But the age of chivalry is gone.*
" *—That of ſophiſters, œconomiſts, and*
" *calculators, has ſucceeded; and the*
" *glory of Europe is extinguiſhed for ever.*
" *Never,*

"*Never, never more, ſhall we behold that*
"*generous loyalty to rank and ſex, that*
"*proud ſubmiſſion, that dignified obedience,*
"*that ſubordination of the heart, which*
"*kept alive, even in ſervitude itſelf, the*
"*ſpirit of an exalted freedom. The un-*
"*bought grace of life, the cheap defence of*
"*nations, the nurſe of manly ſentiment*
"*and heroic enterprize, is gone! It is*
"*gone, that ſenſibility of principle, that*
"*chaſtity of honour, which felt a ſtain like*
"*a wound, which inſpired courage, while*
"*it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled*
"*whatever it touched, and under which*
"*vice itſelf alſo loſt half its evil, by loſing*
"*all its groſſneſs* *." There is a paſſage

* Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in "France," pp. 112, 113.

"for you, Mr. Fitz-Albini, it out-
"heroes all your heroics."

"Mr. Baugham," anſwered Fitz-Albini, in a firm, collected, voice, "though I will not pretend to compli-
"ment either the tone or accent in
"which you have ſpoken, yet I ſhall
"not heſitate to declare, that the paſ-
"ſage, on which perſons of your caſt
"of mind have endeavoured to throw
"ſo much ridicule, is one of the moſt
"beautiful of a work which, not only
"in eloquence, but in wiſdom, ſtands
"perhaps as high as mere human abili-
"ties have ever produced."

The bold manner in which this was ſpoken not only defeated the malignant

triumph of Mr. Baugham, but inſtantly re-compoſed the countenances of the company, who had been about to burſt into a general fit of laughter.

"I dare ſay, it may be very fine," ſaid Sir Thomas Bulmer; "but, to ſay "truth, I don't underſtand it."—"Why, to be free ſpoken," added Sir James Pickman, "I muſt agree with "my friend Sir Thomas."—"Pſhaw! "pſhaw! the man is mad," rejoined Mr. Baugham; "and there's an end "on't!"

"You have indeed made an end of "it," ſaid Fitz-Albini ſarcaſtically, diſdaining to continue the ſubject.

Baugham,

Baugham, a little elated at the advantage he ſuppoſed himſelf to have attained, and yet irritated by the ſcornful countenance of Fitz-Albini at the cloſe of this diſpute, was determined to find ſome freſh ſubject of debate, and ſat watchful and ready to dart forth upon the ſlighteſt opportunity.

A county member was mentioned who had lately been elected for ****ſhire without oppoſition, rather in conſequence of the intimidation which the ſtrength of his purſe held out than of any natural and wide-eſtabliſhed intereſt which he poſſeſſed.

"I cannot think," ſaid Sir Thomas Bulmer, "how that man ever thought

"of

"of ſuch a ſituation. We remember "his father a contractor for clothing "the army but a few years ago. As to "his grandfather, nobody can find out "that he ever had one."

"As for that matter," cried Sir James Pickman, "his money gives him as "good a right to enjoy his ambition as "other people. A bargain is a bar-"gain; and, if his father turned a penny "by ſupplying Government with goods, "why, ſo he ought: every man has a "right to be paid for his induſtry."

"Reaſonably," added Fitz-Albini.

"I think ſo too," replied Sir Thomas; "but ſome how or other, perhaps,

"I can't

"I can't tell why, I don't feel quite ſa-
"tisfied, that the profits of that pay-
"ment ſhould purchaſe for his ſon a
"ſeat in parliament for a large and
"reſpectable county before the ſmell of
"the ſhop is a little farther removed."

"All that is rather old-faſhioned ſtuff,
"Sir Thomas," ſaid Mr. Grinſted, the young clergyman, whoſe father, a banker, had bought for him a rich adjoining rectory, which enabled the ſpruce crop to keep as good hunters, and employ as much time in hunting and drinking, as any of the ſurrounding ſquires. "Be-
"ſides," he added, "who was there to
"contend with him? I know that
"county pretty well, and I have dined
"tolerably often at his houſe.—Why,
"there

" there is not a gentleman; no, nor a " nobleman, in the whole county, that " pretends to keep as good a table, or " as many ſervants, and horſes, as he! " For every guinea that another ſhall " ſpend, I warrant ye, he ſhall ſpend " two!"

" What is become of all the families " that repreſented the county formerly?" ſaid Mr. Stydolfe.

" Oh, as for that," replied Mr. Grinſted, in a pert jeſting tone, " how " ſhould I know? Do you think I " ever enquire what happened in the " days of my grannam? I think " though, when I uſed to be in that " neighbourhood, we dined ſometimes

" with

" with two or three queer, plain, old-
" faſhioned families, of queer-ſounding,
" French-like names, who they ſaid
" were often elected formerly. But, Lord,
" they were no more to be compared
" with Sir Paul Grubſkins, the preſent
" member, in point of living, than my
" ſervant is with me. I remember
" being bored once or twice, when ſome
" pedantic fellow, whom they called an
" antiquarian, met us at dinner there,
" with being dragged to ſee a horrid
" dull room, hung with tapeſtry, and
" an old ſhabby red velvet bed, with
" naſty tarniſhed lace, where they ſaid,
" old Queen Beſs ſlept in one of her
" Progreſſes; for, here they told us the
" ſquire's I don't know how-many-
" times-great grandfather entertained
" the

" the old girl for near a week.—But " what cared I for the old harridan; " or old Squire—(*Montfichet*, I think " they called him—a name I never heard " before)—Squire Montfichet's anceſ- " tors? All I can ſay is, that they " have not taught the Squire how to " give a good chearful dinner; for, a " plainer dinner, and a plainer, more " formal ſet of ſervants, I ſhould never " wiſh to ſit down before!"

" Yet I am told," replied Sir Thomas Bulmer, " that the name of Montfichet, " though you are not acquainted with " it, would, had it been ſet up on that " occaſion, have drawn a very wide and " deeply-rooted intereſt to it, which

" would

"would ſoon have driven Sir Paul "Grubſkins out of the field."

"The muſhroom families are cer-"tainly getting too forward," added Stydolfe; "but the old yeomanry of a "county ſubmit, I believe, but reluc-"tantly to the ſupport of them."

"Pſhaw! pſhaw!" cried Mr. Baugham vehemently, having hitherto ſat biting his lips, "I thought we had had enough "of this cant already.—Let us hear no "more of ſuch prejudiced ſtuff—old fa-"milies, indeed, in this country!—Its "all a *fudge!* The lies of thoſe gentry "by Doctors Commons, who wear a "fool's coat bedaubed with lions and "flower-de-luces on proceſſion-days,

"and

" and would ſell the hangman a coat of
" arms for half a crown, will not go
" down in theſe days.—Why, you laugh
" now—and Fitz-Albini thinks I know
" nothing about the matter—but theſe
" things are true—literally true—Fitz-
" Albini cannot deny them—he muſt
" remember how old Garter granted a
" coat (and a royal one too) to the *Jack*
" *Ketch* of the day.—Old Writheſley,
" and Dethick, and Byſhe, and twenty
" more of them—I ſhould wiſh to know
" what credit is to be given to any of
" their pedigrees, by thoſe who know
" their characters! Yet theſe are the
" authentic documents on which the
" lazy race of what are called antient
" gentry are to build their claims of
" pre-eminence over men more de-
" ſerving

" ſerving than themſelves. I ſay it is
" all a juggle, a mixture of ſhameful
" knavery and diſguſting nonſenſe.—To
" own the truth, I uſed to hear ſo much
" on the ſubject, and to ſee thoſe who
" had been proſperous in the world
" treated with ſuch improper *hauteur*,
" that it excited my enquiry, and I
" have, ſince my return to England,
" paid ſome attention to it. It was with
" pleaſure, therefore, that I embraced
" the opportunity to accompany a fooliſh
" acquaintance to the proper office to
" enroll his arms. I deny the ſtories
" that are generally propagated regard-
" ing the birth of us Eaſt-Indians. But
" this man had literally worn a livery.
" His name was not a bad-ſounding
" one; and, as ſoon as he came to
" England,

" England, the coach-maker eaſily
" found an old coat for his carriage. Of
" this coat he demanded at the office
" what is called a confirmation.—The
" gentry there looked big, and blank,
" and inquiſitive, by turns, and then
" began to aſk ſeveral impertinent queſ-
" tions; and he was deſired to leave the
" matter for the conſideration of another
" day.—We went away—and in the
" mean time a friend gave us a hint
" that the fees for a *confirmation* are in
" no degree of proportion to thoſe for
" a *new grant*; and that if my acquaint-
" ance demanded the coat as a new
" grant, he would have no more trouble
" than that of paying the gratuity, and
" obtaining the ſame coat, or ſo nearly
" the ſame coat, that the difference

" would

" would not be perceptible, and there
" would be little difficulty in getting it
" called a *confirmation* (which is an ad-
" miſſion of an antient right) into the
" bargain. Thus inſtructed, we ſallied
" forth a ſecond time, and managed the
" matter admirably. We got the con-
" firmation, with no other difference
" than an imperceptible ſpot of Ermine
" on a charge of the ſhield, which
" nobody will ever ſee if painted there,
" though it will probably be ſoon left
" out; but which will ſave the he-
" rald's credit, if ever the matter be
" called in queſtion.—Now I appeal to
" Fitz-Albini's candour to anſwer all
" this, if he can.—If he cannot, let
" our ears no more be ſtunned with ſuch
" a farrago of baſe and empty fiction!

" One

"One of the vileſt and loweſt impoſi-
"tions that ever was practiſed on the
"*rights of human nature!*"

"I know not why," cried Fitz-Albini,
"Mr. Baugham has taken ſo wide a
"flight from the ſubject of converſa-
"tion; and ſtill leſs can I conceive why
"he has called on *me* to defend the
"abuſes of a certain office, which, if
"they exiſt, are, in my opinion, de-
"ſerving of all the terms of reproach
"which he has applied to them. I am
"ſure none of my principles are, as he
"ſeems to think, dependent on the ho-
"neſty or ſkill of this office; of whoſe
"members, and their proceedings, I
"am utterly ignorant, except what I
"have gathered from Anſtis's 'Hiſtory

" of the Order of the Garter,' a book
" of credit, to which I ſuppoſe Mr.
" Baugham alludes, and where indeed
" there are ſeveral well-authenticated ſto-
" ries which give too much colour to his
" complaints. But how this is to ſhake
" the credit due to birth; how it is to
" work the downfal of well-authenti-
" cated genealogies of illuſtrious fami-
" lies; I am utterly at a loſs to gueſs.
" Mr. Baugham miſtakes: it is not
" from this office, it is not from the
" ſubſcription of the names of all the
" Garters, and the Clarencieux, and
" Norroys, that a pedigree derives the
" evidence of its truth. All property,
" all inheritable rights, would indeed
" be in a pitiable ſituation, were they
" dependent on the judgement of any

" narrow

" narrow office, whoſe minds were not
" rendered at once acute and enlarged
" by the ſtudy and the practice of the
" general laws of evidence, and whoſe
" education and rank in life did not place
" them above all ſuſpicion of ſiniſter
" prejudices. I am not about to enter
" into a diſſertation upon Heraldry:
" but Mr. Baugham ſurely need not be
" told, that the uſe of arms became he-
" reditary at leaſt three centuries before
" the eſtabliſhment of the office in
" queſtion; that at thoſe periods, when
" they could not be bought and ſold,
" to obtain arms was an indiſputable
" honour; and to uſurp them, when
" they were openly exhibited on a
" ſhield, and other parts of the armour,
" was ſcarcely poſſible, from the nature

" of the military ſubordination of thoſe
" days. Nor is it unfrequent that they
" have left an unequivocal record be-
" hind them: they ſtill, in many in-
" ſtances, exiſt ſculptured upon tombs,
" or impreſſed upon ſeals appendant to
" deeds, which were executed at the
" time. This is what no herald can
" give or take away.—Grants of arms
" from the office are in their nature too
" contemptible for any well-founded
" diſtinction; and *confirmations*, there-
" fore, which are a derivative from
" them, muſt of courſe be ſo. Were
" the practice of the office, therefore,
" as baſe as Mr. Baugham repreſents it
" to be (which I hope it is not; at leaſt
" I think they muſt poſſeſs ſome uſeful
" materials and hints of enquiry, if uſed
" with

" with caution); but were it ſo, yet I
" totally deny his concluſions. Howe-
" ver the boaſt of deſcent may be au-
" thenticated in other countries, I am
" ſure there are a very conſiderable
" number of families in this kingdom,
" who can prove a moſt honourable ſe-
" ries of progenitors, for at leaſt ſix
" centuries, by the moſt ſatisfactory and
" demonſtrable evidence."

" I cannot think," replied Mr. Baugham, " how you can ſuffer your
" ſtrong and diſcriminating judgement
" to be ſo led aſtray by the warmth of
" your imagination. You muſt excuſe
" me, for we have been free with each
" other this evening; but really you
" ſeem mad upon the ſubject. My

" good ſir, if you lay aſide the heralds'
" pedigrees (which are indeed often
" without dates, proofs, or any thing
" but a bare ſtring of names), yet look
" into the Peerages, and Baronetages,
" and candidly own if your critical eye
" has not diſcovered innumerable mean
" and diſguſting falſehoods, which muſt
" ſhake one's confidence in all thoſe
" high-ſounding claims of importance,
" of which we hear ſo much."

" You forget," anſwered Fitz-Albini,
" that theſe are mere panegyrical books,
" on which no perſon of judgement
" ever thinks of relying. I admit
" birth is not enough regarded in ele-
" vations to honours in this country:
" and I am convinced the diſregard is
" pro-

" productive of very alarming evils.
" But is it right or wiſe to be always
" arguing againſt inſtitutions from the
" abuſe of them? Is it fair, becauſe
" there are many lying pedigrees, and
" becauſe many vain perſons make un-
" founded pretenſions to diſtinction, to
" argue there is no truth in any claims
" to honourable or noble deſcent? But
" admit, for a moment, that the greater
" part of thoſe, who lay claim to a re-
" mote antiquity of honours, have
" no ſufficient ground for them; yet,
" compared with new men, who were
" themſelves born among the lower
" ranks, they have all the requiſites
" which, in the ſtricteſt period of the
" feudal inſtitutions, were deemed ne-
" ceſſary. The definition of a gentle-

" man by deſcent was, a perſon, whoſe
" grandfather, by the father's ſide, had
" a right to bear arms. I preſume that
" Mr. Baugham will concede to me,
" that the number of perſons of this
" deſcription is very great in this coun-
" try; and that, as the uſage at leaſt is
" generally a matter almoſt within me-
" mory, the admiſſion reſts on no ab-
" ſtruſe enquiries. I feel a little aſhamed
" of theſe minute diſcuſſions, as if I
" conſidered of importance a ſubject,
" of which the puerile abuſes have
" thrown upon it ſo proper a ridicule.
" But Mr. Baugham has, in ſome de-
" gree, compelled me into them, by
" involving with them, with a good
" deal of ſubtlety, the downfal of a
" great and wiſe principle, which, in

" ſuch

" ſuch a government as ours, ought ne-
" ver to be ſhaken. Where ſubordi-
" nation of ranks is neceſſary (and I
" ſhould wiſh to know, indeed, in what
" poſſible form of government it is not
" neceſſary), *Birth*, as I have ſaid be-
" fore, and as Gibbon teſtifies, is *the*
" *plaineſt and leaſt invidious of all diſ-*
" *tinctions*.—Let me again, in my turn,
" appeal to the candour of Mr.
" Baugham? Let me aſk, if the power
" to ſpend money, to purchaſe rotten
" boroughs, and to fill up the loans of a
" miniſter, is a reaſon for giving men an
" hereditary place above well-educated,
" virtuous, and independent, families, of
" deep root, wide alliances, antient pro-
" perty, and a kind of preſcriptive influ-
" ence, over the minds of their inferiors,

" which is felt without irritation, and
" acknowledged without a ſtruggle?
" Riches are fugitive; birth is inſepa-
" rable from the perſon; new-got
" wealth is active and intriguing; an-
" tient property is ſluggiſh, though,
" upon great occaſions, of much reli-
" ance and mighty power. If the bar-
" rier of birth is thrown down, a reſt-
" leſs and wicked ambition will never
" ceaſe to diſturb the quiet of ſociety.

" I muſt now notice a mode of argu-
" ment which Mr. Baugham and his
" friends have taken, in my opinion a
" little extraordinary. They firſt deny
" that any reſpect or privileges ought
" to be allowed to birth, upon the old
" ground of the folly of rewarding a
" man.

" man for the merits of his anceſtors.
" When reaſons are alleged which
" operate very ſtrongly, at leaſt upon
" my mind, why a preference ſhould,
" in many caſes, be paid to birth,
" they ſhift their ground, and deny the
" exiſtence in this country of well-aſ-
" certained pedigrees. If they rely on
" this, they bring the matter to a very
" ſhort queſtion, and moſt aſſuredly
" chooſe to rely on an opinion, which
" may be diſproved; as I have ſaid, by
" the moſt demonſtrable evidence. When
" Mr. Baugham endeavoured to impli-
" cate this queſtion with the conduct and
" character of a certain office, I thought
" it right to ſeparate them in my reply,
" more particularly, as I have before
" mentioned, that I could ſpeak nothing

" from my own experience; and, whe-
" ther true or not, it had nothing to do
" with the main queſtion. But I muſt
" take this opportunity of ſaying, that,
" however ſome individuals may have
" diſgraced this profeſſion (as ſome will
" do every profeſſion), yet ſurely no-
" thing is more illiberal than to involve
" the whole body in ſuch ſtigmas. Nor
" can I poſſibly allow any unfavourable
" ideas of the members in general,
" when I recollect the names of Glover,
" Camden, Dugdale, Aſhmole, King,
" and Anſtis, men who were an honour
" to the literature of their country. And
" when I read the works of a living
" member of the college, who has ad-
" ded ſome curious, acute, and critical,
" *Illuſtrations of Britiſh Hiſtory and Bio-*

" *graphy* to the national ſtores, I have " no doubt, that, if ſome may be " found unworthy, there are others, " whoſe liberality, integrity, and know- " ledge, deſerve all our confidence and " praiſe. The biographical accounts, " which accompany thoſe beautiful en- " gravings by *Bartolozzi* from the Hol- " bein heads, the moſt beautiful por- " traits which I think were ever produ- " ced by the graver, and which proba- " bly Mr. Baugham, who collects ex- " penſive-engravings, has bought, are " peculiarly ingenious and excellent; " and they are underſtood to be writ- " ten by a member of that office, upon " which he would throw ſo much con- " tempt."

He

He had ſcarce ended this long diſpute, when a ſummons to the drawing-room came opportunely to prevent any farther warm language between him and Mr. Baugham, who appeared rather ſilenced than ſatisfied. Yet the boldneſs with which he had diſcuſſed topics, from which they who wiſh them well are too apt, through fear of ridicule, to ſhrink, had made a general impreſſion, and particularly on all thoſe who had any pretenſions to education and family.

The converſation and the wine had given an unuſual animation to the looks of Fitz-Albini. He entered the drawing-room with an happy confidence which was not loſt upon the ladies. After wandering about the room for a little time,

time, while the ſolicitous looks of Miſs Pickman in vain endeavoured to fix him near herſelf, he at length took a chair by Miſs St. Leger, and entered into a converſation ſo different from his uſual embarraſſment, that, though ſhe at firſt felt diſtreſſed, it was impoſſible for her long to continue her reſerve.

Her countenance, which ſoon betrayed the delight (which yet ſhe endeavoured to ſuppreſs) that animated her whole frame, was too apparent to the anxious eyes of Miſs Pickman, who ſat overwhelmed by the moſt tormenting vexation and jealouſy. Yet far, indeed, was it from her wiſh to inflict ſuch pain; nor had ſhe the ſmalleſt taint of that malignant triumph which is too common to female

female minds. But ſuch was the pleaſure of Fitz-Albini's converſation, which, as ſoon as her attention appeared fixed, gradually opened, and became peculiarly ingenious, intereſting, and energetic, that ſhe at times forgot not only her rival, but the preſence of any others of the company. The ſtory of the park-keeper's daughter now vaniſhed from her memory, as it had already done from that of the reſt. And ſhe indulged herſelf in liſtening and replying to him without controul.

He told her many of his ſorrows and diſappointments; he expatiated tenderly upon his father's illneſs; and diſcovered a pliability and ſoftneſs of temper, which, from the high and haughty tone

of

of his countenance and language, ſhe had never ſuſpected.

While he thus poſſeſſed the power to engage her attention, he beheld her perſon illumined by a very uncommon degree of beauty, and his eyes betrayed an expreſſion of admiration which did not eſcape even the dull, though inquiſitive, obſervance of Mrs. Bracey, who reſolved, however, for ſome time, to conceal her own diſpleaſure, that ſhe might add to the poignant mortification of Miſs Pickman, whoſe looks, as ſhe perceived, were betraying all the agonies of a mind convulſed by the moſt cruel of all paſſions.

But, for Mrs. Bracey long to command her own temper, whatever might be the gratification ſhe propoſed to herſelf, was impoſſible. She could now continue the exertion no longer; and ſhe buſtled about, at ſupper, in ſuch a manner among the party, who were not aware what ſhe had in view, that ſhe contrived to ſeat Fitz-Albini between herſelf and Miſs Pickman; while Miſs St. Leger was thruſt to the bottom of the ſame ſide, at the greateſt poſſible diſtance from him.

Thus placed, beyond the power of eſcape, Fitz-Albini, now in good humour with himſelf, and all the world, was gentle, but ſilent; while the gloomy

and

and pouting countenance of Miſs Pickman, and the inſolent and taunting expreſſions of Mrs. Bracey, were equally loſt upon him. He ſat ſo immerſed in his own thoughts, that all the irritating addreſſes of the latter could neither recall his attentions, nor diſcompoſe his looks.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.